



THE INDEPENDENT

Tuesday 11 November 1997 45p (IR50p) No 3,451

INSIDE TODAY

FADS/7

In your 30s? Good news: you're a youth
LESBIANS/18
Why they're missing from public life

TODAY'S NEWS

Hague warns CBI of euro danger

William Hague yesterday warned business leaders that a European single currency could be like "a burning building with no exits". In contrast, Gordon Brown urged the country to get ready now for single currency membership, before making a referendum decision after the next election.

There could not have been a bigger contrast between the Government and Opposition on display at the CBI national conference in Birmingham, with Mr Brown and Mr Hague presenting two sides of the political coin - for and against the euro. The Chancellor said: "The euro will radically transform the whole single market. So from now my message is: let's get down together to the serious business of preparation."

He said the preparations that were needed were too important to be left to dogma or internal party politics, and too important to be left aside for years of more indecision and drift. But while the tenor of the Government line was constructive, Mr Hague, who received a warm welcome from the conference, could hardly have been more hostile - drawing together every possible argument for euro-resistance.

In one passage of five paragraphs the Tory leader offered 10 or so reasons for caution, saying: "We cannot ignore the fundamental differences in the structure of the British economy compared to other European economies. It is a fact that we do a much higher proportion of our trade with non-EU countries."

Mr Hague warned of wage cuts, tax hikes, and the creation of vicious unemployment blackspots, bigger booms and deeper recessions. And unlike the Exchange Rate Mechanism, he said, a single currency was for all time. "British business," Mr Hague warned the CBI, "could find itself trapped in a burning building with no exits." Reports, pages 8 and 22.

Castration drugs plan

The Prison Service is looking at ways to treat sex offenders with drugs to curb their libido. The so-called chemical castration would be used for rapists and paedophiles alongside psychological programmes for rehabilitation. But some experts doubt whether the treatment would work because sexual offences are complex, often resulting from family problems, aggression, and a desire to humiliate rather than simply the sex drive. Page 4

New Stonehenge found

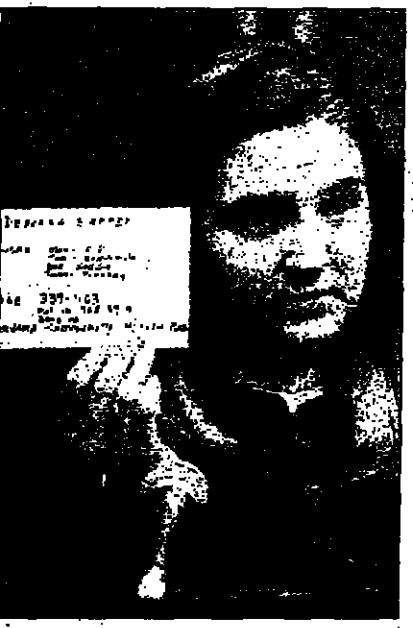
The largest prehistoric building ever found anywhere in the world has been discovered at a sacred Stone Age site in South West England. Archaeological tests carried out by English Heritage scientists show that the 5,000-year-old structure - almost certainly a huge temple - was at least six times the size of Stonehenge and four times the size of any of the other known timber temples built in England during the Neolithic era. The building - the remains of which lie underground in a field at Seanton Drew, seven miles south of Bristol, was completely unknown until scientists started surveying the area a few weeks ago. Page 7

Deadlock on Iraq

Saddam Hussein and the UN were still locked on collision course last night as a top Iraqi envoy arrived at UN headquarters in New York on what seemed a fruitless mission to plead Baghdad's cause. The Iraqi leader failed yesterday to act on earlier threats to shoot down U2 spy planes flying over Iraq, but there was no sign of a climbdown over the core of the dispute - granting access to American members of UN weapons inspection teams. Page 5

WEATHER The Eye, page 10
TELEVISION The Eye, page 12
CROSSWORDS Page 32 and the Eye, page 9
Web address: <http://www.independent.co.uk>

Out! Woodward is free after courtroom thriller



Emotional ordeal: Louise Woodward in court at various stages of her trial in Massachusetts

Judge Hiller Zobel could have thrown out the murder verdict against Louise Woodward and sent her home. He didn't, but he did the next best thing by reducing her sentence to manslaughter and in effect freeing her. Our correspondent followed another twist in the Boston nanny saga.

In the astounding final act of an American courtroom thriller, Louise Woodward, the British teenager, was allowed to go free last night after her sentence of second degree murder was reduced to involuntary manslaughter.

Judge Hiller Zobel ruled last night that Woodward should serve 279 days in prison - precisely the time she had already spent in custody. However, she will have to remain in Massachusetts, with her passport confiscated, pending an appeal by the prosecution which could take weeks.

Judge Zobel issued his decision to reduce sentence in a dense, but often intensely personal, 16-page order that was to have been published first on the Internet, but which, because of a power-supply problem in the Boston area, was instead disseminated by such old-fashioned technologies as photocopies and fax machines.

Copies of the text were being sold on the street outside the courthouse by officials for \$8 each.

Ms Woodward learned of the judge's ruling from a television in her prison cell. "After intensive, cool, calm reflection, I am morally certain that allowing this defendant on this evidence to remain convicted of second-degree murder would be a miscarriage of justice," the judge concluded.

It means that the 19-year-old from Elton, Cheshire, who came to America last year to work as an au pair in her gap year between school and university, no longer faces the mandatory sentence passed on her by Judge Zobel on 31 October - life imprisonment with possibility of parole only after 15 years.

A factor that could have worked against the defence was the decision that it made with Ms Woodward, just before the end of the trial, to deny the jury the chance to consider a manslaughter sentence as an option. It was a huge "all-or-nothing" gambit, that the defence thought at the time would force the jury to acquit. It backfired spectacularly. There was little outward delight from

the defence camp last night, however. Most importantly, there was nothing in the judge's order to offer absolution to Ms Woodward. Instead, he worked from an assumption of responsibility on Ms Woodward's part for the collapse into a coma of baby Matthew Eappen on 4 February and Matthew's death five days later in a Boston hospital.

But, in reasoning that the murder two verdict was too harsh, Judge Zobel depicts a defendant too young and too upset to fully understand her actions and their potentially fatal consequences. "I believe that the circumstances in which the Defendant acted were characterised by confusion, inexperience, frustration, immaturity and some anger, but not malice (in the legal sense) supporting a conviction for second degree murder".

The judge added that it was a "sad scenario" that should be "most fairly characterised as manslaughter, not mandatory-life-sentence murder. I view the evidence as disclosing confusion, fright, and bad judgement, rather than rage or malice", he wrote.

Although Judge Zobel agreed that the murder two verdict was disproportionate, he rejected two parallel motions filed by the defence. One asked for an instant acquittal of Ms Woodward on the grounds of insufficient prosecution evidence and the other demanded a retrial.

Each possible justification for a retrial - ranging from adverse pre-trial publicity that may have biased the jury, to the belated discovery of important photographs of Matthew's damaged skull - was ruled as irrelevant by the judge.

Siding with the defence, however, Judge Zobel did not penalise Ms Woodward for her "all or nothing" gamble at the trial.

"Should the Defendant now be permitted to second-guess herself and her lawyers? If one regards the trial of a criminal case as a high-stakes game of chance where losers must accept their losses, the answer is, Certainly Not," he wrote, but added: "A court, none the less, is not a casino."

Ms Woodward was immediately reunited with her parents in a side room of the court awaiting her release.

It was not clear how long she will have to stay in America awaiting the appeal which the prosecution has only 30 days to lodge.

Ms Woodward's supporters in the Rigger pub in Elton, cheered and shouted with delight as they watched the television.

Some waved large banners with the message: "Thank you Judge Zobel" and some cried and waved yellow ribbons.

The long battle, page 3

Labour pays back Formula One owner's donation

The Labour Party was forced by the parliamentary guardian of standards to hand back a donation of more than £5,000 received from Formula One's Bernie Ecclestone. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, says the row over the Government's U-turn on tobacco advertising is damaging Tony Blair.

In an embarrassing climb-down, the Labour Party announced last night that it was returning the donation on the advice of Sir Patrick Neill, the new chairman of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

Mr Ecclestone, president of the Formula One Constructors' Association, met Tony Blair with Max Mosley, who heads the sport's governing body, before the Government decided to exclude Formula One racing from the ban on tobacco advertising.

A party source last night confirmed that Mr Ecclestone had made one donation of more than £5,000 to party funds before the general election. The party refused to say how much, and the refusal sparked more speculation at Westminster that it could amount to a six figure-sum.

The source said Sir Patrick told the party that criticism of the donation would be "wrong and unfair. However, he believes that in order to avoid even the appearance of of any influence, on balance, we should return the donation and avert any further donation".

The party's rules on disclosure require it to name those who donate more than £5,000. Mr Ecclestone's name

would have appeared in the accounts next year if it had not been returned. Mr Blair took the decision to call in Sir Patrick last week. As the controversy mounted over the Government U-turn, and the financial links between the party and both Mr Ecclestone and Mr Mosley, Mr Blair asked Tom Sawyer, the party's general secretary, to inform Sir Patrick about any donations to the party.

Sir Patrick, who officially took over yesterday from Lord Nolan in the anti-sleaze role, left the party with no option but to return the money. But the Tories were scenting more blood on the tracks, and were determined to follow-up the disclosures.

Sir Patrick said last night that he was "delighted" by the party's action, but it will increase the calls for total reform of party funding, possibly leading to state funding.

"I make no criticism of the party for originally receiving a donation from Mr Ecclestone, but in the light of the changed circumstances I stressed the importance of those in public life being judged not only by the reality but also by the appearance."

"I submitted my advice to the general secretary [Mr Sawyer] and I am extremely pleased with the speed with which he has moved to accept it and to announce that fact."

Labour sources said Mr Blair had called on Sir Patrick to carry out an inquiry into party funding before the row erupted. The party insisted that Mr Mosley was in a different category, as a long-standing party supporter who made undisclosed sums to the One Thousand Club, for which minimum donations are £1,000.

Last night Mr Ecclestone said he had made a donation to the Labour Party, but never sought any favours from the party or government.

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3/WOODWARD CASE

THE INDEPENDENT
TUESDAY
11 NOVEMBER 1997

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Judge sees confusion and fright, rather than malice

It begins with a quotation from John Adams and reminds readers that the author can relate to the tragedy of the case because he is a grandfather. But, says David Osborne, the memorandum released by Judge Hiller Zobel is ultimately a serious, tightly-written argument for leniency for a victim of a 'miscarriage of justice'.

The 16-page order and memorandum is far from the letter of exoneration that Louise Woodward and her army of friends may have been anticipating. It reduces her sentence, that's true. But beyond that, there is no additional comfort for the young

Briton. In announcing his intention to reduce the verdict from murder two to manslaughter, "in accordance with my discretion and my duty", Judge Zobel, offers this scenario for what he believes may have happened on the afternoon of 4 February. It is a far cry from declaring Ms Woodward innocent.

"Viewing the evidence broadly, as I am permitted to do, I believe that the circumstances in which the Defendant acted were characterised by confusion, inexperience, frustration, immaturity, and some anger, but not malice (in the legal sense) supporting a conviction of second degree murder."

"Frustrated by her inability to quiet the crying child, she was a little rough with him" under circumstances where another, perhaps wiser, person would have sought to restrain the physical impulse. The rough-

ness was sufficient to start (or re-start) a bleeding that escalated fatally."

Judge Zobel went on: "The sad scenario is, in my judgement after having heard all the evidence and considered the interests of justice, most fairly characterised as manslaughter, not mandatory-life-sentence murder. I view the evidence as disclosing confusion, fright, and bad judgement, rather than rage or malice."

Of the extraordinary campaign to have Ms Woodward released, Judge Zobel makes a clear statement at the very start of the document. He was in no manner swayed by it. And to make his point, he offers words of John Adams that are apt indeed.

The order begins thus: "The law, John Adams told a Massachusetts jury while defending British citizens on trial for murder, is inflexible, inexorable, and deaf: inexorable to the cries of the defendant; 'deaf' as an

adder to the clamours of the populace'. His words ring true, 227 years later."

The populace in this case - the Woodward supporters in Elton especially - could take only disappointment from the first pages of the order. These explain why Judge Zobel saw no merit in either of the two most radical post-verdict motions for the defence: that Ms Woodward be acquitted and the verdict simply thrown out, or that a new trial be called.

Nor, Judge Zobel says, could he allow himself to be affected by the pain of the Eappens. Noting that he is both a grandfather and father, the judge wrote: "I particularly recognise and acknowledge the indescribable pain Matthew Eappen's death has caused his parents and grandparents." He went on: "As a judge I am duty bound to ignore it."

While the chances of an instant acquittal

were always remote in the extreme, in its motions, the defence made a powerful play for a retrial, citing numerous incidents as cause for such action. One by one, however, Zobel dispenses with these.

He does not accept, for instance, the defence claim that it was unfairly disadvantaged at trial by the late disclosure by the state of potentially critical photographs of Matthew Eappen's brain. Addressing the fact that some defence testimony had not been transcribed and was not available for the jury when it asked for it, Judge Zobel said it was "unfortunate" but not grounds for a retrial.

Nor did he accept that the jury had been unreasonably affected by pre-trial publicity of the case. "All the jurors seated satisfied the Court and counsel that neither the publicity nor any other cause had affected their individual ability to decide the case entirely on the evidence."

In reducing the sentence, Judge Zobel does not give an opinion on the defence's contention that the cause of death was a re-bleed of an old head injury. Indeed, he insists, that had the jury had manslaughter as an option on its verdict slip, it could have chosen it because the evidence could have been consistent with Woodward inflicting "roughness" sufficient to trigger such a re-bleed.

He wrote: "If the jury determines that those were the facts the combination would amount to an unjustified, intentional, uncontested-to touching (i.e. a batter) which resulted in death. Manslaughter is simply a fatal battery."

Zobel concludes thus: "After intensive, cool, calm reflection, I am morally certain that allowing this defendant on this evidence to remain convicted of second-degree murder would be a miscarriage of justice."

Louise's sister is 'happy enough', but fight goes on

Judge Zobel's decision to reduce Louise Woodward's sentence was greeted with a palpable sense of relief on both sides of the Atlantic yesterday. *Esther Leach* in Elton and *Kim Sengupta* listened to the reaction.

They wanted her acquitted and on the next flight home. But the supporters of the Justice for Louise Woodward Campaign welcomed the reduced charge of involuntary manslaughter.

Her sister Vicky, sitting at her boyfriend's house in Elton, Cheshire, was said to be "happy enough". The few villagers who managed to squeeze past the media into the Rigger pub, said they had not been expecting any other decision.

Jean Jones, a key campaigner and friend of the family, addressed the throng. "Naturally we would prefer to know that Louise is coming home. However, we take some comfort from Judge Hiller Zobel's decision to reduce the charge. We firmly believed as we always have in Louise's total innocence."

Steve Collins, whose son Steven is the boyfriend of Vicky Woodward, said the campaign will not be over until Louise is exonerated. "The campaign has not yet taken its toll on us. We have had to remain strong for

Vicky's sake and also for Sue and Gary, her parents, who depend on us to take care of her."

Those who may have felt a certain sense of responsibility, directly or indirectly, for what had happened to her, were also pleased.

Stephen Colwell, one of the jurors at the Massachusetts court which had convicted her said: "I am greatly relieved at this decision. I was distraught afterwards and wondered perhaps whether a new trial would have to be ordered but to have a reduction is a great relief to me personally and to other jurors. We were boxed into a corner with three lousy choices."

Philip Johnson, the president of the EF Au Pair Agency which had taken Louise to Boston, said: "We see Judge Zobel's decision to reduce the charge against Louise to involuntary manslaughter as the first step in the process leading to her being cleared."

"As we have said before, we firmly believe Louise is innocent. She will have our full support and confidence throughout any further legal proceedings," he said.

Bradley Clarkson, an American writer on the law, admitted: "There is a sense of relief that Judge Zobel has taken this course. For the time being it can be seen as a form of damage limitation. However, this case has raised important questions about the whole issue of justice in the USA."



Louise Woodward's defense attorney Barry Scheck, right, speaks after Judge Zobel's decision, watched by Andrew Good, left, and Harvey Silvergate. Photograph: Steven Sennel/AP

Internet fails to deliver as the decision is lost in Cyberspace

The weakness of using the Internet as a communications tool was revealed to a worldwide audience yesterday when British and American television screens were given over to an unimpressive web page that failed to come up with the judge's decision hours after it was first expected.

The Web site where the judgement was to be

announced, the Lawyer's Weekly Home Page, could not handle the demand from around the world, and its Internet service provider suffered a power failure just as Judge Hiller Zobel's ruling was due to go live. So many people wanted to see the news immediately that access to the pages slowed to a snail's pace.

Sky News in Britain had

logged onto the Lawyer's Weekly site days before the judgement was due to make sure it would not be stuck in a queue. It diligently filled its screen with an image of the page, and waited for the result to come in at 3pm. It waited. And waited.

Eventually, at 3.08pm, CNN had an unconfirmed report from "court sources" that Woodward had had her

conviction reduced to manslaughter. Within seconds, that report was picked up by news organisations around the world and they cut from the Web site to reporters on the ground.

Within ten minutes of the unconfirmed reports emerging, reporters were on screen reading from paper copies of Judge Zobel's 16-

page judgement. "We had taken steps to have other sources in place in case the electronic stuff didn't work," said a spokesman for CNN. "We're very glad we did."

And the Internet? At 5pm a message box continued to appear on computer screens around the world - for those still interested - saying: "The attempt to load <http://www.lweekly.com/>

failed". Those already connected reported that nothing had appeared and it could be hours before the judgement was available online. Despite setting up so-called mirror sites to carry the judgement on different computers in America and Europe, the Internet proved it was not up to the task.

— Paul McCann, Media Correspondent

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Chemical castration option 'explored'

Convicted sex offenders could soon be chemically castrated, according to the Prison Service. Michael Streeter, Legal Affairs Correspondent, hears some experts say the treatment is of limited value.

The Prison Service said yesterday that it was "exploring" how to treat sex offenders with anti-libidinal drugs. So-called "chemical castration" would be part of the already established Sex Offenders Treatment Programme for rapists and paedophiles, and would run alongside psychological programmes.

It would be the first time that the Prison Service, whose statement was a response to a *World in Action* television documentary last night, formally adopted such a drastic programme, although individual prison doctors do use the drug treatment.

However, experts yesterday

doubted whether the use of such drugs - which can be given only with the consent of patients - would have more than "very limited" effect in treating the 4,270 convicted sex offenders currently in British prisons.

One experienced psychiatrist, who has prescribed the drugs to sex offenders, praised the Home Office for their initiative but warned against expecting too much.

The doctor, who asked not to be named, said the reasons why people committed sexual offences were complex and included personal or family problems, aggression and a desire to humiliate or dominate victims. "It is not just about their sex drive. The drugs may reduce the sex drive and in some cases affect their ability to carry out an attack, but may not stop someone's desire to carry out such an attack," he said.

He added that, potentially, the drugs, which can be given as tablets twice a day or injections every three months, could even increase someone's ag-

gression by making them frustrated at being unable to gain an erection.

In a statement to the programme makers, the Prison Service said it had "identified a proportion of sex offenders for whom this psychological treatment could usefully supplement treatment with anti-libidinal drugs". Yesterday, the Service said it had no date for when the treatment could be adopted.

Last night's broadcast reported that the leader of a violent paedophile gang has told a fellow prisoner that he will kill again after he is released early next year.

Sidney Cooke, who has changed his name to Lomas in an attempt to escape the paedophile register, was jailed in 1989 after running the gang which raped and strangled Jason Swift, a 14-year-old runaway.

Cooke's former cellmate, known only as Leslie, said: "He thinks of kids as meat... the minute he walks out of the gate, no young boy will be safe."

Censor fails to make young star's day



Reservoir puppy: Mischa Barton, in a scene from *Lawn Dogs*. Despite starring in the movie, she has been refused permission to attend the London premiere because she is too young

Eleven-year-old Mischa Barton is the youngest star at this year's London Film Festival, but the British child actress has been deemed too young to see the film premiere tonight. The film's producer Duncan Kenworthy, who also produced *Four Weddings And A Funeral*, has pleaded unsuccessfully for an exception to be made in Mischa's case. But he has been told there can be no exceptions as the film, *Lawn Dogs*, has a 15 certificate.

Mischa will go through the bizarre process of introducing the film at a West End cinema, hanging around outside

with her mother while it is screened, then returning at the end for the applause.

Her mother, Nuala Barton, said yesterday: "She can understand the certification. The subject matter is very deep. Somebody is shot and there is a little bit of sexuality in the beginning, though not to do with the child."

She said that she had no qualms about Mischa's participation. "I chose the film because I thought it was a very good showpiece for her. It was well written and has been made very sensitively. At the same time it is not a movie for children. It is

not something I would take her little sister to see."

The film tells of an innocent but misconstrued relationship between an imaginative girl and the man who mows the lawns.

Mischa has already done modelling work for Calvin Klein in New York, where she lives with her parents who emigrated there in 1990. She was spotted by a talent agent after taking a summer camp acting course three years ago.

— David Lister
Arts News Editor

Damages for suicide widow

The widow of a man who hanged himself in police custody yesterday received around £9,000 damages from the Metropolitan Police after two Appeal Court judges ruled the force had been negligent. But the finding is to be challenged by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner in the House of Lords.

Martin Lynch, arrested after allegations of deception in March 1990, was able to hang himself from the spy-hole in his cell door because the flap had been left open.

M16 man held

A former M16 officer was remanded in custody yesterday accused of planning to publish a book about his time with the Secret Intelligence Service.

Richard Tomlinson, 34, will appear again at Bow Street magistrates' court in London on 17 November. It was alleged that he disclosed, in Sydney, Australia, information he acquired as a member of the SIS. He was charged under Section 1 of the Official Secrets Act 1989.

Fine for Ford

Ford was yesterday fined £10,000 by Cardiff Crown Court for polluting a wildlife site and killing more than a thousand salmon, trout and grayling.

A toxic liquid seeped out of a broken underground pipe at the car manufacturer's engine plant in Bridgend, South Wales, and seeped into the River Ewenny. Ford was also ordered to pay £11,400 in costs for the prosecution by the Government's Environment Agency. The company said it had spent £220,000 to prevent such an accident happening again.

— Nicholas Schoon

Ashby appeal

Eddie Ashby, friend and one-time business partner of Terry Venables, the former England soccer coach, yesterday lost his appeal against his four-month jail sentence for "blatant" breaches of bankruptcy rules.

Riddle of man's sliced penis

A man who had part of his penis sliced off, but was refusing to reveal how it happened, was last night recovering in hospital as detectives waited to question him.

The 31-year-old man was described as being in a "stable" condition in Manchester Royal Infirmary yesterday after undergoing emergency surgery.

Emergency services were called to a house in the Moss Side area of the city at 11.45 on Sunday morning, where they found the man bleeding but conscious. A spokesman for Greater Manchester Ambulance Service said the man was in a "distressed" state as "his genitals had been sliced".

"He was bleeding heavily but amazingly was still conscious and able to walk around. The man had arrived at [the house] after the injuries had occurred... Paramedics failed to find any trace of the genitals."

It is understood that the man had gone to the home of a former girlfriend after the injury occurred. A woman was interviewed by police yesterday but was thought to have nothing to do with the incident.

A Greater Manchester police spokeswoman said their inquiries were continuing. "He's very reluctant to tell anybody anything. We've not found a penis end."

Nicholas Parkhouse, a con-

sultant plastic surgeon at The Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead, Sussex, said many factors dictated how possible it was to operate successfully. "The principles of the surgery of repairing apply to the penis as they do to the hand or face."

If the severed penis part was not found, emergency plastic surgery could tidy the wound. After it had healed, which might take around 12 months, reconstructive surgery could then be carried out to build up part of the missing length.

But Mr Parkhouse said: "... it is unlikely the functioning and appearance will ever be entirely normal."

— Louis Jury

Headmaster's killer loses appeal against conviction

The teenage killer of headmaster Philip Lawrence yesterday lost his appeal against his murder conviction.

Learoo Chindamo, 17, who stabbed Mr Lawrence to death outside his school as he defended a pupil, showed no emotion as the Court of Appeal dismissed his bid for freedom - watched by Mr Lawrence's widow, Frances.

The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham, sitting with Mr Justice Douglas Brown and Mr Justice Kay, rejected criticisms of the summing-up of Judge Neil Denison, at the Old Bailey, in October 1996.

"We have to say that in the light of all the arguments advanced we are in no doubt that this conviction is safe."

Mr Lawrence was attacked

in December 1995 outside St George's school in Maida Vale, west London, when a gang of 12 youths led by Chindamo went to attack a boy.

He was punched and stabbed by Chindamo and died the same evening.

Chindamo, who was 15 at the time of the stabbing and was a member of the Wo-Sing-Wo gang - which aspired to be the

juvenile equivalent of the Triads - has always claimed that another youth was the killer.

He claimed he was the victim of mistaken identity as the other youth was wearing his jacket, and that he was 30ft away from the murder scene.

Chindamo was ordered to be detained indefinitely after a jury found him guilty of the crime.

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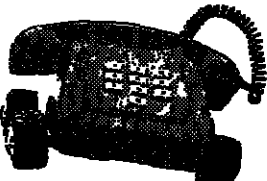
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Clinton talks tough as Saddam plays for time

A military showdown between the United States and Iraq appeared to be on hold yesterday, as the focus of action shifted to the diplomatic arena of the United Nations. Mary Dejevsky in Washington says there is still no sign that Iraq will back down over its refusal to co-operate with UN inspections.

Conflicting signals were coming from all sides except the Iraqis, as the United Nations Security Council prepared to consider the report of the three special envoys it had dispatched to Iraq last week.

Yesterday morning, the UN defied Iraqi threats and sent a U2 spy plane on a mission over central Iraq. Routine weapons inspections on the ground, however, were suspended for the day even though the head of UNSCOM - the UN commission overseeing the inspections - had earlier said they would proceed.

The aircraft, whose progress was closely monitored by US warplanes from the no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq, completed its mission without incident. It was said by the Iraqis to be out of range of its anti-aircraft defences, but it provoked a hostile rhetorical response. Mohammad al-Sahaf, the foreign minister, was quoted as saying that Iraq no longer recognised U2 flights as part of the UN monitoring mechanism.

The minister said Iraq would "act towards the planes and other American aircraft violating our skies in a manner that preserves Iraq's sovereignty and security".

Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi Prime Minister, subsequently told reporters at the UN that Iraq wanted the U2 missions scrapped. He was speaking after a meeting the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, after arriving on a Concorde flight from Paris.

Mr Aziz insisted that Iraq had complied with UN resolutions and inspectors to the let-

ter, and blamed America for the fact that it was still being accused of violations. Commenting on a report that an inspection team had since uncovered three missiles, he said they had not found engines for the missiles. "Every industrialist and every specialist knows that when you don't have engines and you don't have launchers, you don't have a missile," he said.

"Give us a chance," he pleaded, several times over. Rehearsing the message he said he wanted to convey to the UN Security Council later in the day, he said that Iraq wanted the inspection teams to be reconstituted to make them "genuinely international", a date for the ending of UN sanctions, and for guarantees that outsiders would "not intrude into the security of a member state". These demands, he said, were "legitimate".

Kofi Annan had earlier said that there was still time for Iraq to change its mind and comply with UN inspection requirements.

The same note of patient firmness was struck by the US Vice-President, Al Gore, who took over the baton from President Bill Clinton for the day. Iraq, he said, "will have to comply with the UN resolutions". He went on: "Of course, we hope that discussions underway will result in Saddam [Hussein, the Iraqi President] deciding that he will change his behaviour."

The US ambassador to the UN, Bill Richardson, stressed that the US still ruled out no option to make Iraq comply with UN weapons inspections and lift its threat to expel American members of inspection teams. He called for further sanctions "with teeth, with punitive measures" and called on Iraq to "stop playing games and start behaving like a normal nation".

In Iraq, meanwhile, the media indicated that the use of civilians as human shields would again be a tactic in the event of a new military strike. "Hundreds of Iraqi families," the national news agency said, "have expressed their readiness to stay in the ... presidential palaces in defiance of any American military aggression".



Biting off more than they can chew? Iraqis show their support for Saddam Hussein in Baghdad yesterday

Photograph: Reuters

BLAIR'S WARNING TO SADDAM

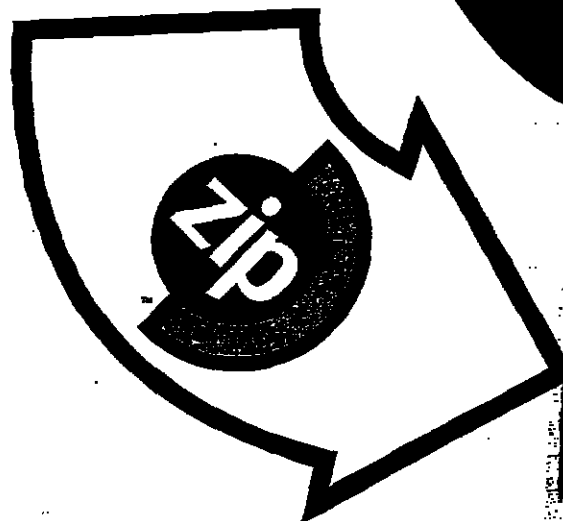
Tony Blair last night warned the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, not to repeat the "fatal miscalculation" he had made over the Gulf War.

The Prime Minister described Saddam as a "still dangerous dictator", and used his Mansion House speech to show the Government's determination to back the United States in standing firm against the threat of conflict.

"We want to see a diplomatic solution and will work with others to achieve this in the next few days, but Saddam should not take as a sign of weakness the international community's desire to find a peaceful way forward if possible."

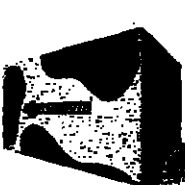
"He has made this fatal miscalculation before. For his sake, I hope he will not make it again," Mr Blair said.

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Baghdad runs risk of drubbing by West

In political terms, Saddam Hussein may see his current clash with the UN as a 'win-win' confrontation. But by any military reckoning, as Rupert Cornwell explains, he is bound to end up on the losing side if the United States and its allies do use force.

Since its crushing defeat in the Gulf War, Iraq has rebuilt its shattered air defence system with some success, according to Western analysts. In the SA-2 and the more modern SA-6, it possesses surface-to-air missiles capable of downing the U-2 spy plane operating on behalf of the United Nations and which ventured into Iraqi airspace yesterday.

In practice, the ancient and lumbering U-2, with a top speed of just 420 knots, would be escorted by a large protective force of fighters, as well as aircraft carrying anti-radiation missiles, electronic warfare equipment and airborne warnings systems. Allied offensive forces, overwhelmingly American, are the most modern in the skies.

The main thrust would presumably come from the Tomahawk cruise missiles which can be launched from

any one of seven US warships currently in the northern Gulf area, including the cruisers *Port Royal* and *Lake Champlain* and four destroyers.

It was Cruise missiles which were used in the last attack by the US against Iraq in autumn 1996, in the shape of two separate strikes against military targets to punish Saddam for his incursions into the no-go areas in Kurdish northern Iraq, and in the strike in June 1993 in retaliation for an alleged Iraqi plot to assassinate former President George Bush during a visit to Kuwait. If the present confrontation does lead to air strikes, it would be the fourth such attack by the US-led coalition since the end of the Gulf War in March 1991.

But if US commanders decide to risk piloted combat planes, they also have a wide range of options. Leading the current US deployment is the 95,000-ton aircraft carrier *Nimitz*, carrying 75 war planes including 36 F-18 Hornet attack jets and 14 F-14 Tomcat fighters. In addition substantial US air power is based in Saudi Arabia.

The main supporting role in any strike would be played by Britain, which has 12 GR-1 Tornados in the region all equipped with laser guided bombs and air-to-air missiles. Britain also has two warships in the Gulf.

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The end is nigh for the pound note

The butt of English jokes and a much-loved national symbol, the Scottish £1 note may soon be consigned to history. The Royal Bank of Scotland is asking customers what they think of Britain's only surviving pound note - and the suspicion is the bank would like to drop it.

Pound notes are expensive to produce and last on average only about nine months, ground up in pocket or purse with harder-wearing coins.

The Bank of England stopped issuing pound notes in 1984 and within five years the Bank of Scotland and the Clydesdale Bank had followed suit.

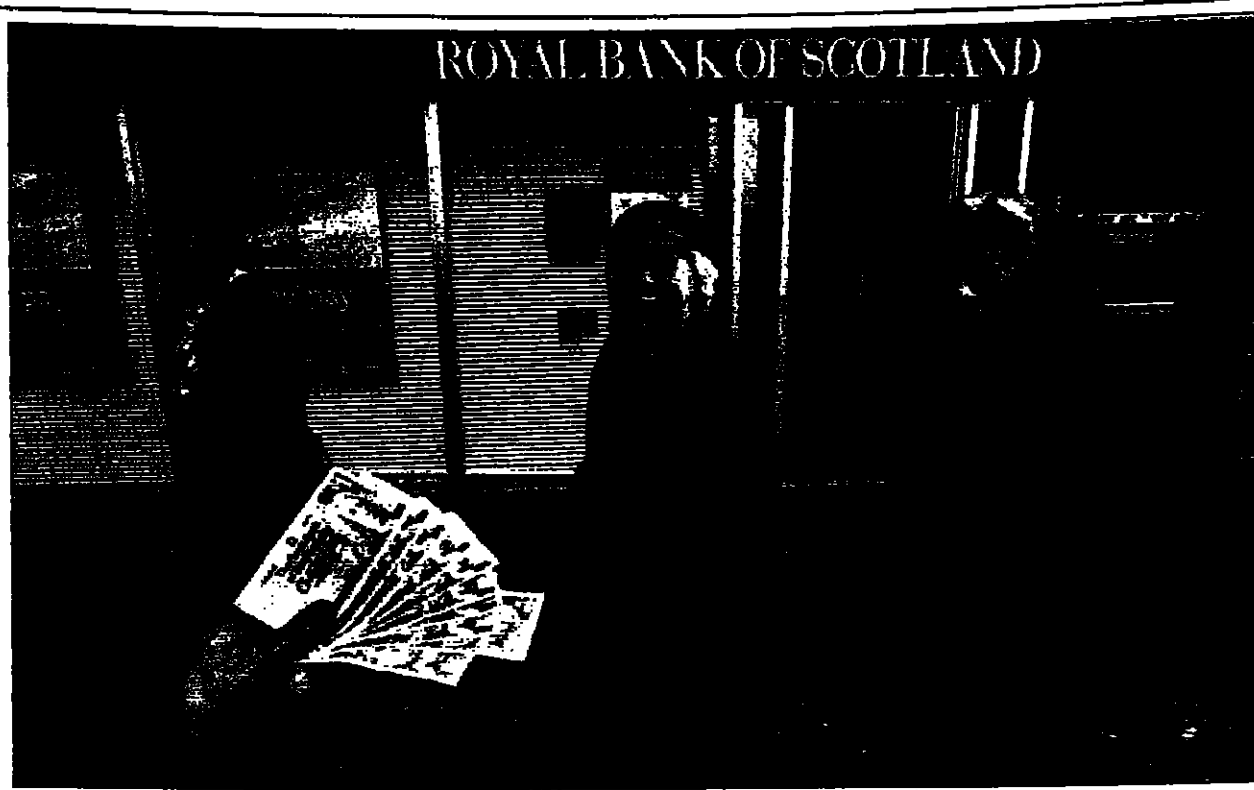
Scots were promiscuous in their use of currency before the issue of pound notes. Spanish doubloons, ducats, and the coins of Germany, Holland and

England were all used in preference to domestic coins of uncertain value.

Though the Act of Union of 1707 also brought currency union, national differences were still acknowledged. The first Scottish £1 note was issued by the Bank of Scotland in 1704. The Royal's first was introduced in 1727. A spokesman insisted yesterday that no decision had been taken. "We are doing some research to find out what the public think," he said.

Peter Stillwell, chief executive of the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, said retailers would not regret the end of the note. "People like their Scottish notes, but unfortunately the £1 note gets so latty and can be difficult to count and handle."

— Stephen Goodwin



Cash crop: Shops will mind less than shoppers if the Royal Bank of Scotland drops the £1 note. Photograph: Drew Farrell

Nasal spray may help MS sufferers

A new therapy for multiple sclerosis that would be sniffed rather than swallowed has shown promising results in laboratory tests.

Jeremy Laurance, Health Editor, assesses hopes for a treatment that could be as simple to use as an asthma inhaler.

Scientists believe they may have found a way of protecting the body's tissues from attack when the immune system turns on itself, causing the nerve-cell damage that results in multiple sclerosis.

The disease, which affects about 85,000 people in the UK, causes wasting of the muscles and progressive paralysis as the myelin sheath surrounding nerve cells is destroyed. The body's immune system perceives the myelin as foreign, for reasons that are not understood, and attacks it as it would attack an invading infection.

Research by Professor David Wraith of the department of pathology and microbiology at the University of Bristol, using blood taken from MS sufferers, has shown that the autoimmune response that causes the damage can be switched off.

"We have found we can take the T-cells that are part of the body's immune system and re-educate them so they stop mis-

behaving," Professor Wraith said. "Potentially this is very important. Existing treatments are non-specific and tend to have side effects."

The research, to be presented at a symposium on "Regulating the Immune Response" at the United Medical and Dental Schools of Guy's and St Thomas's Hospitals in London tomorrow, is backed by the biotechnology company, Peptide Therapeutics, with funding from the Multiple Sclerosis Society, in a joint venture which guarantees the society a share of the royalties should the treatment prove effective. It is hoped that clinical trials will begin in 18 months.

Peter Cardy, chief executive of the MS society, said: "It is the first time we have entered into a collaboration of this kind, which has the potential to generate funds to be re-invested in supporting people with MS."

In multiple sclerosis, the T-cells in the immune system recognise specific regions of the protein sequence in the myelin against which they launch their attack. Professor Wraith and his team have shown that by challenging the T-cells with peptides that correspond to these regions the attack can be halted.

When given orally the results were disappointing, probably because the drug was broken down in the gut, but when administered as a nasal spray the suppression of immune response was highly promising.

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Sex offender given life for murder

A serial sex offender was jailed for life yesterday for strangling a schoolboy while under the supervision of a local council.

Steven Leisk, 34, will serve a minimum of 25 years in jail after the judge at the High Court in Aberdeen told him he represented a danger to the public.

Leisk pleaded guilty to the abduction and murder last July of nine-year-old Scott Simpson, whose body was found four days later in the grounds of Aberdeen University. He had been strangled with a scarf.

Scott was playing football with friends in a park near his home in the city when he was approached by Leisk, who gave him a roll-up cigarette and a note that read: "Hi kid. If you want some of the latest megadrive games or any computer games, £5 each, follow me."

The boy showed the note to two girls and told them he would be back in 20 minutes. Colin Boyd QC, prosecuting, told the court. Scott's parents reported him missing that evening, and Grampian police

mounted a huge search. Mr Boyd said police failed to find Scott's body the following day despite searching the lane in which it was eventually found.

"Also of concern is the fact that the social work department who were supervising the accused's release on licence were aware that the accused was residing directly opposite the place where Scott was last seen alive," Mr Boyd said. "They took no steps to convey that information to police."

Leisk, who led police to the lane after he was arrested, had four previous convictions for sex offences. He also admitted assaults on two 14-year-old boys earlier this year.

Leisk, who was abused as a child and was an army medical orderly in the Falklands, according to his defence counsel, was arrested after a relative telephoned police. He told detectives that he strangled Scott by mistake while trying to muffle his screams: "I just panicked. I told him to stop the noise."

— Kathy Marks

DAILY POEM

The Man with the Wooden Leg

by Katherine Mansfield

There was a man lived quite near us;
He had a wooden leg and a goldfinch in a green cage.
His name was Farkey Anderson,
And he'd been in a war to get his leg.
We were very sad about him,
Because he had such a beautiful smile
And was such a big man to live in a very small house.
When he walked on the road his leg did not matter so much;
But when he walked in his little house,
It made an ugly noise.
Little Brother said his goldfinch sang the loudest of all birds,
So that he should not hear his poor leg
And feel too sorry about it.

This poem comes from Kenneth Baker's *Faber Book of War Poetry*, which is now re-issued as a paperback (Faber & Faber, £9.99).

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Giant temple sheds new light on the Stone Age

The largest prehistoric building ever found anywhere in the world has been discovered at a sacred Stone Age site in South-west England. David Keys, Archaeology Correspondent, says the structure would have even dwarfed Stonehenge.

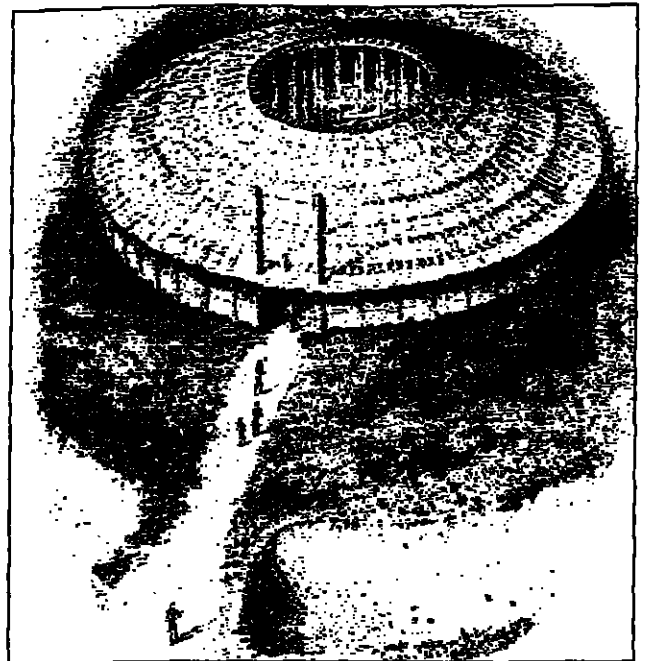
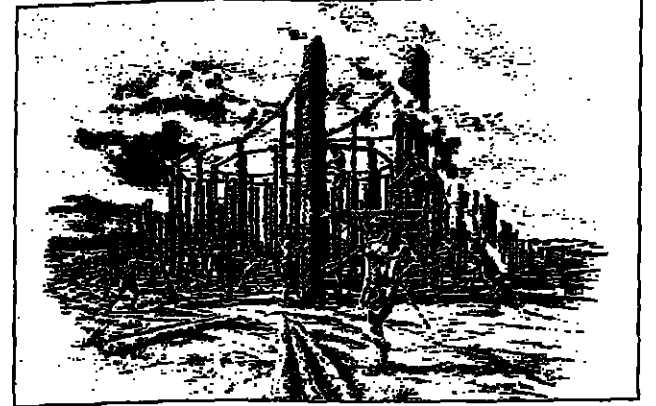
Archaeological tests carried out by English Heritage scientists have revealed that the 5,000-year-old structure - almost certainly a huge temple - had a diameter of 95 metres, extraordinarily large and one-third that of the giant, Millennium Dome now under construction at Greenwich, in east London.

The Stone Age building was probably at least ten metres high, possibly with a thatched roof supported by more than 400 massive wooden columns, each around a metre in diameter. It was at least six times the size of Stonehenge and four times the size of any of the other known timber temples built in England during the Neolithic era.

The structure was surrounded by a huge 135-metre diameter, six-metre wide ditch with a large 40-metre wide entrance in the north-east.

The building, the remains of which - mainly massive column holes - lie underground in a field at Stanton Drew seven miles south of Bristol, was completely unknown until scientists started surveying the area a few weeks ago. Using the archaeological equivalent of an X-ray, a magnetometer, a scientific team from English Heritage probed deep beneath the surface of the field without digging a single hole. The discovery is without doubt one of the most important archaeological finds made anywhere in the world this century.

Although there are no gold and no inscriptions, the sheer scale of the newly discovered



Remains of a 5,000-year-old temple (artist's impressions of it under construction and complete, above) were revealed by X-ray beneath standing stones (left) - erected 300 years later - at Stanton Drew, near Bristol Photograph: Jay Williams

building suggests that prehistoric south-west England was even more sophisticated than has been thought until now.

At the centre of the building, the scientists detected five large pits which may have been for sacrificial offerings. Evidence from other similar but much smaller sites has in the past shown that human and animal sacrifices were almost certainly carried out in such temples.

In the 17th century, when one of the stones at Stanton Drew fell over, human remains were apparently discovered

in the hole where the stone had been.

The picture that is increasingly emerging of the Neolithic age in the Wiltshire/Somerset area, is of a very complex hierarchical society in which massive power must have rested with either kings, paramount chieftains or priests.

The economy appears to have been based on cattle ranching - but huge amounts of manpower were diverted to the construction of vast monumental buildings and other structures including the huge 130-foot

high conical "pyramid" of Silbury Hill, the vast 1,400-foot diameter standing-stone complex of Avebury and the early stages of Stonehenge itself.

Archaeologists have always been impressed with stone circles such as Stonehenge and Avebury - but this giant building with its forest of massive columns is likely to force a total re-examination of the nature and scale of Neolithic Britain.

Some archaeologists have already suggested very controversially the existence of small towns or even states. This extraordinary discovery will force academics to consider whether it is evidence of an embryonic civilisation which failed to survive in the long term.

English Heritage officials say the structure was "at least as old and of comparable significance to Stonehenge". The key scientist involved in the magnetometry survey, Dr Andrew David, described the discovery as "amazing".

It was always known that the site was of religious importance in prehistoric times because three stone circles survive

there to this day. The circles, which all together consist of around 60 standing stones, date from approximately 2700 BC. And it's likely that the giant wooden building dates from several hundred years earlier. Perhaps around 3000 BC.

The largest of the three stone circles was actually built on exactly the same site as the giant building and was probably its immediate successor.

Dr Aubrey Burl, one of Britain's leading experts on stone circles and henge monuments, describing the discovery

as "magnificent", predicted that other similarly massive buildings could be discovered through new magnetometry surveys and air photography in the future.

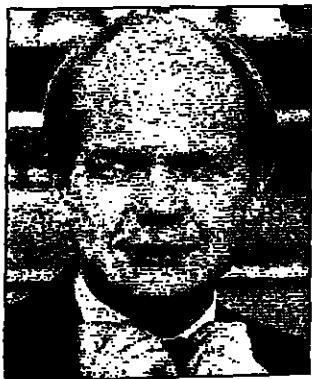
The newly discovered giant building at Stanton Drew, was probably used for sky worship of some sort. The main entrance faces towards the point on the horizon where the sun would have risen on midsummer's day.

Precisely what went on at such sites remains for the time being largely a mystery. As well as having a probable sacrificial

function, it could also have been associated with fertility and water rituals. Ancient legends about the site link it with wedding rituals and the stones are described in myth as celebrants who dared to dance through the night into Sunday - and were therefore turned to stone.

At some similar yet smaller sites large numbers of human jawbones have been found and such places may have been used as temples for communing with the spirits or gods through the ancestors.

Ulrika has it. William and Nicola do not.
Welcome to Middle Youth



It is 6am on Sunday morning and two people are leaving the Cross night-club in north London. One is 35 and one is 33. They have been up all night dancing. After a few hours' sleep they go to a garden centre. The are living the life of the Middle Youth.

Middle Youth is the latest name tag coined by the people that brought us Yuppies and Sloane Rangers - the marketing men who are paid to spot demographic niches and exploit them.

For the Nineties they have identified a new kind of consumer, greying groovers who refuse to grow old gracefully: people from their late twenties to their early forties who cling to the trappings of youth. These are people with a concern about fashion, a wild social life and an up-to-date record collection but who are at the same time old enough to have a nice house, a garden, children and responsibilities.

They exist thanks to better careers for women, couples having children much later in life and the fact that "youth culture" and all its trappings is the dominant cultural form of the Nineties.

In this case Middle Youth is the target market of Red, a new magazine from the publishers Emap Eian which launches in January. It is aimed at women who have grown out of *Marie Claire* and *Cosmopolitan* but who feel too young, or too trendy, to



Question of attitude: Ulrika Jonsson stand for Middle Youth, but William Hague and Nicola Horlick (above right) don't



The upper limit of Middle Youth is defined by those who are Baby-Boomers. Baby-Boomers were born in the years after the Second World War and were student radicals in the Sixties. They have been unwilling to give up their Levi's and their Rolling Stones and are a powerful economic and political force. They have their own saxophone-playing world leader in Bill Clinton and a booming market in low-fat foods and plastic surgery to keep them looking young.

The difference is that a Dire Straits album lurks in the record collection of every Baby-Boomer, while every Middle Youth has the mellow "trip hop" of Portishead in their Ikea CD rack.

The problem for Red, is that refusing to grow up is much more a male trait than a female one. Men are the ones who swap their wife and children for a pair of leather trousers, a pony tail and a cocaine habit when they hit 40.

Ulrika Jonsson and Paula Yates might be high-profile examples of Middle Youth, but they have the benefits of celebrity and funds to keep childcare worries and wrinkles at bay. It could be that hard-working, rather than hard-partying, women such as Nicola Horlick are more the norm for women in Red's age-group.

— Paul McCann, Media Correspondent

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Lords' block for Mayor

The Government is facing defeat in the House of Lords over its plans for an elected mayor and assembly for London, a senior Liberal Democrat peer claimed yesterday.

Lord Tope, who leads his party on the Association of London Government, said he would be "astonished" if plans for a single-question referendum on the subject next May were not overturned. The Government wants simply to ask Londoners if they want an elected mayor and assembly, rather than allowing them the chance to say what sort of democracy they want for the capital.

Lord Tope said that Labour Peers, unlike MPs, would not be under so much pressure to toe the party line. "If the Bill gets to the Lords... then I would be very surprised indeed if it gets through the Lords," he said.

Nick Raynsford, the minister responsible for the measures, said Londoners could not have an assembly without a mayor or a mayor without an assembly. "It is not a lucky dip and it is not a pick and mix," he said.

— Fran Abrams

Back in the front line – the king of spin shows how to box clever

It had been a while since Peter Mandelson's last utterance in the House of Commons, and the poor man was clearly overwrought with nerves. What was that about everyone singing from the government hymn sheet? Poor Mr M must have wandered out of his pew and tumbled down the road into a completely different church before launching into this fulsome confession:

"Some very serious allegations have been made about the way in which public officials, publicly funded civil servants, are being drawn by ministers into party political activities," he blabbed. "That misuse of civil servants is a disgraceful attack on their neutrality and impartiality."

OK, so I admit it. Mr Mandelson's stout defence of public servants' rights was mounted not yesterday – when the minister without portfolio appeared for the first time to answer questions on the millennium exhibition in Greenwich, south-east London – but in his previous appearance on 11 July 1996.

The man "in the dark" of Clare Short's memorable description does not seem to relish the glare of parliamentary scrutiny. So it was no wonder he looked a little wan when he entered the chamber yesterday. It had been filling up gradually in anticipation of M's long-awaited performance, and Tony Banks – who had just been fielding questions for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport – clearly intended to stick around for the big event. The sports minister dug his colleague in the ribs and gave him what one can only presume was meant to be a gesture of encouragement. It consisted of two

clenched fists and a sort of wiggle, reminiscent of the salute that accompanies a cry of "Yesss!!" when a goal is scored.

What we will certainly never know is why poor M was so wound up about the whole thing. Like the true Machiavelli he is, he had it all sorted in advance. His fellow-MPs were allotted just five minutes in which to grill him, about four and a half of which were taken up by a clearly spontaneous question from Labour's Phyllis Starkey (the location of whose Milton Keynes South West seat clearly gives her a deep personal interest in matters pertaining to Greenwich).

What plans, she wanted to know, had the minister got for a transport infrastructure for the exhibition? Amazingly, Mr Mandelson had a reply ready: there would be "park and sail" facilities sited all over London in order to ease the passage of the good people of Bedfordshire on their way to the dome, he told her. Dr Starkey, naturally surprised and delighted, thanked him profusely.

An earnest contribution from the Liberal Democrats' Simon Hughes, a quick dig from the Tories about how nice it was to welcome Mr Mandelson back after such a long absence, and that was it.

By now, the minister was looking relaxed and relieved. But just in case we were in any doubt about how nervous he was, the Secretary of State for Culture, Chris Smith, gave him a fatherly pat on the back as the two left the chamber together. "How sweet," we all thought. "Isn't it nice that good friends Mr Mandelson has?"

— Fran Abrams



Rare performance: An infrequent speaker in the House, the minister without portfolio faced his colleagues yesterday

Blair backs the 'rebranding' of Britain abroad

Tony Blair donned traditional white tie and tails last night to present his first major foreign affairs speech at the Mansion House. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, says the Prime Minister insisted Britain would "compete on brains not brawn".

Tony Blair last night described himself as a "patriot" and reinforced the Government's "rebranding" of Britain's image abroad as "a great place to be".

Wearing traditional evening dress, which was spurned by Gordon Brown when the Chancellor delivered his own Mansion House speech, Mr Blair

said Britain had "new optimism, confidence and self-assurance" about its future.

But after criticism that last week's Anglo-French summit at Canary Wharf in Docklands, east London, focused too much on "cool Britannia", Mr Blair said the new confidence in Britain was not just about style.

"It is of course about substance," he said. "It's about knowing where we are going. That's what gives us the confidence. We do. And with the right blend of intelligence and determination, we will get there. We compete on brains not brawn."

The Prime Minister's goals included a "quantum leap" in education, a low-inflation economy, and reform of the constitution.

His speech contrasted with the anti-European scepticism of

the Tories, but it showed little change on the main foreign affairs strategy.

However, Mr Blair said that foreign policy should not be seen as a self-contained part of government in a box marked "abroad" and "foreigners". It should complement and reflect domestic goals, and be part of the mission of national renewal.

"In the end I am simply a patriot. I believe in Britain, but it is an enlightened patriotism," he said. "Patriotism based not on narrow chauvinism but on the right values and principles."

Presenting himself as a staunch ally of the United States over Iraq, and a pro-European, Mr Blair said Britain would be strong in Europe and strong with the US – "there is no choice between the two. Our aim should be to deepen our relationship with the US at

all levels. We are the bridge between the US and Europe. Let us use it."

Leaving all sentiment behind, Mr Blair said the US was a "force for good in the world – they can always be relied on when the chips are down. The same should always be true of Britain."

Underlining Britain's readiness to stand firm against Saddam Hussein, Mr Blair said Britain needed strong defence, and to use power and influence for a purpose.

Britain must be a key player on international issues such as the environment, drugs, terrorism, crime, human rights and development.

Crime would be one of the key issues on the agenda at the Birmingham summit for the British EU presidency next year, he said.

Training fraud cost taxpayer £5m

Minister will today carpet employers leaders for presiding over one of the biggest alleged frauds involving taxpayers' money to surface since Labour came to power.

Representatives from 28 employer-led Training and Enterprise Councils will be held to account for allowing £5m to be paid for allegedly bogus qualifications.

Today's meeting in Whitehall comes at a time of mounting government disquiet over the seeming inability of TECs to exercise sufficient control over the £1.25bn of state funds they disperse. TECs were created by the last government and charged with responsibility for providing training for the unemployed and developing local economies.

The TEC leaders have been called in today by Dr Kim Howells, minister of education and employment, after the Qualifications and Curriculum Au-



Kim Howells: Called meeting

thority decided to withdraw 1,600 National Vocational Qualifications. The certificates were awarded by the Road Transport Industry Training Board, formerly state-controlled, but now a private company. Some of the A-level

equivalent certificates for vehicle maintenance were awarded to people who apparently do not exist. Others were issued with the qualification without the requisite level of achievement. Dr Howells will order the TECs to pay the £5m back to the Exchequer.

The award of the certificates is being investigated by police and follows another investigation into Employment Link, a training agency which performed £1m worth of work for the Central Training and Enterprise Council in the Midlands. Dr Howells has threatened to wind up the organisation and merge it with neighbouring TECs.

The government is known to be investigating other cases of alleged fraud by companies contracted to TECs in England, Wales and Scotland.

Last month Michael Richard, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Educa-

tion and Employment, told TEC chairman of his "deep concern about errors and irregular payments". He said: "I wish to do everything possible to reverse what appears to be a fall in standards of financial control."

Chris Humphries, chief executive of the TEC National Council, is anxious to dismiss any suggestion of fraud on the part of TEC directors or officers directly employed by them. Mr Humphries is expected to attend today's meeting and will point out that cases under investigation involve less than half a per cent of the 500,000 trainees that TECs work with each year.

Mr Humphries will argue that most of the fraud allegations that involve cases which are more than three years old and have come to light as a result of more stringent financial controls imposed by the TECs themselves.

— Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

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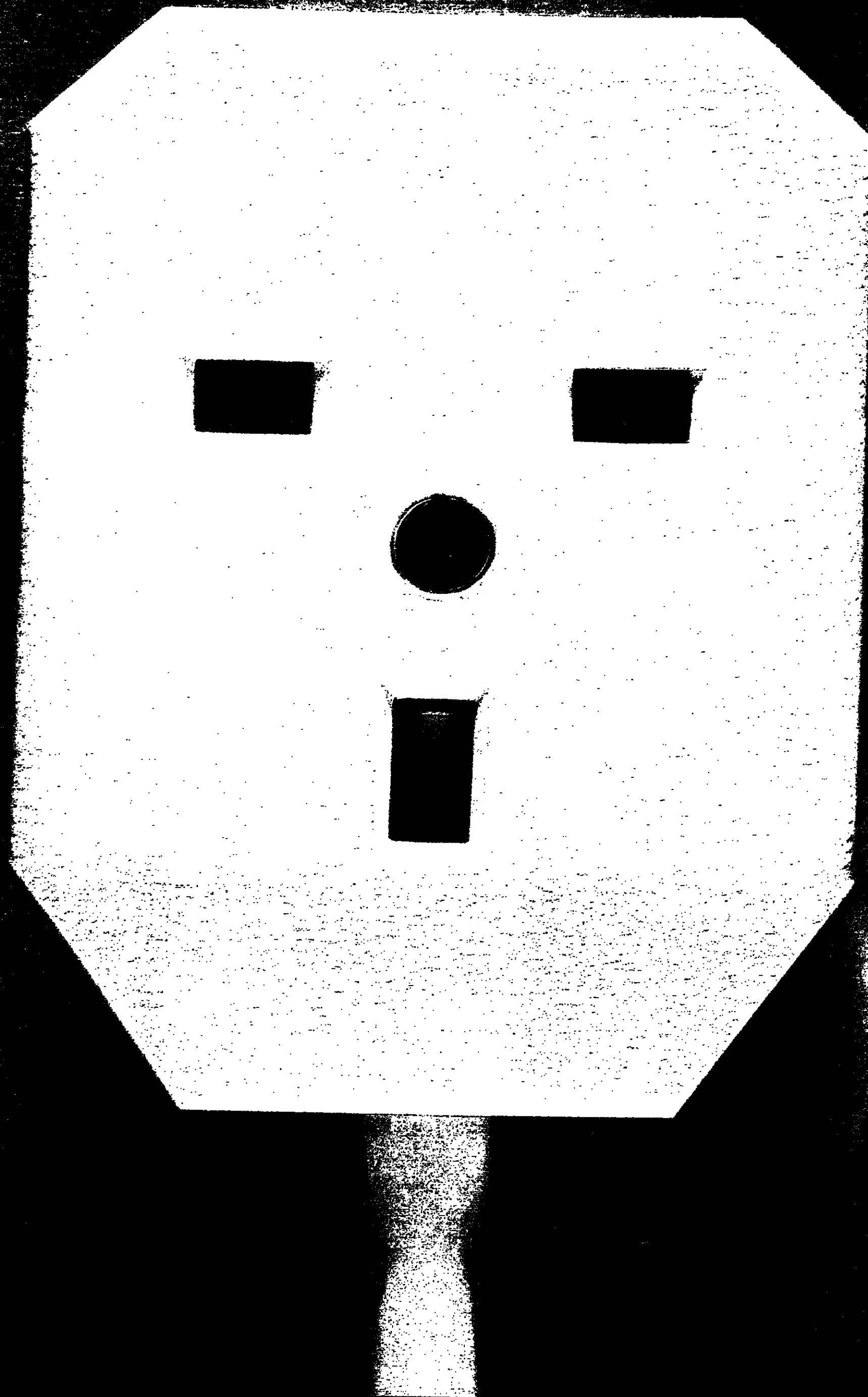
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Algeria's 'dirty secret'

A senior Algerian officer accused Algerian secret services of being responsible for the massacre in September of 200 villagers at Beni Messous, blamed on Muslim fundamentalist guerrillas.

In an interview with the French daily *Le Monde*, the man, who said he was a senior army officer in Algiers' Directorate of Intelligence and Security (DRS), also repeated charges that Algerian secret services were responsible for two Paris bomb attacks blamed on Islamist guerrillas. — Reuters

Israeli accord with Vatican

Israel and the Vatican sealed an accord yesterday formally recognising the legal status of Catholic institutions and strengthening diplomatic ties.

The sides said they had worked on the agreement since they established relations ending nearly 2,000 years of sometimes hostile Catholic-Jewish relations. Under the deal, Israel legally recognises church officials and offices. The deal will aid the church in property issues and judicial disputes. — Reuters, Jerusalem

Yeltsin and Jiang solve border crisis

The Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, and the Chinese head of state, Jiang Zemin, yesterday ended a long-running border dispute that exploded into armed clashes in the 1960s.

The highlight of the fifth Sino-Russian summit was a declaration laying to rest wrangles over implementation of a 1991 accord that mapped out the entire 2,800-mile frontier.

Border tension between China and Russia has flared on and off for several hundred years since the days of the tsars. It erupted most recently at the height of ideological confrontation between Moscow and Peking as they vied for supremacy in the Communist world.

Red Army soldiers of the former Soviet Union fought skirmishes with Chinese People's Liberation Army troops in 1969 on ice floes along frozen border rivers.

President Jiang said the agreement would "create good guarantees for peace, stability and calm on the Russian-

Chinese border". Experts have been haggling over where to place markers on the eastern frontier stretching in an arc from Mongolia to the Sea of Japan.

There is no dispute over a 32-mile wisp of border in mountains to the west between Kazakhstan and the westernmost tip of Mongolia.

At a ceremony in the Great Hall of the People, the Chinese vice-premier, Li Lanqing, and the Russian First Deputy Prime Minister, Boris Nemtsov, signed three documents aimed at boosting a worryingly low level of trade.

Under a framework agreement on the pipeline, gas would flow from Siberia to China's Pacific Coast for 30 years. The supplies would also serve Japan and South Korea.

Mr Yeltsin hailed the success of his third state visit to China, and stressed a personal chemistry with Mr Jiang of a kind that was pointedly absent when the Chinese leader met the American President



Comrades in arms: Boris Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin greet each other. Photograph: Reuters

Bill Clinton in Washington last month.

Mr Yeltsin and Mr Jiang locked in a bear hug at the steps of Peking's Great Hall of the People, and after they emerged from their summit they spoke warmly of their grandchildren at a light-heart-

ed meeting with reporters. A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman quoted Mr Jiang as saying: "Yeltsin is an old friend, every time we meet it is happy and intimate."

Bitter rivalry between Moscow and Peking from 1960, following their close

alliance of the previous decade, is now almost completely forgotten.

The relationship has blossomed since the late 1980s and is now described by both countries as a "constructive partnership". — Reuters, Peking

Clinton defeated on trade treaties

In one of the biggest political defeats of his presidency, Bill Clinton yesterday shelved his attempt to obtain enhanced power to negotiate international trade agreements. Analysts in Washington compared the defeat to his first-term failure to pass a comprehensive reform of the health system and saw it as evidence that the tide of US politics had turned against free trade.

Mr Clinton had worked into the early hours of yesterday morning, telephoning Democrats in the House of Representatives to try to persuade them to come over to his side, and Vice-President Al Gore had spent most of Thursday and Friday lobbying personally in the corridors of Congress. In the event, Mr Clinton was around 20 votes short in the House of Representatives, although the measure might have passed the Senate.

The frantic efforts by the Administration on "fast track" made the defeat particularly embarrassing. But it was also a political blow to Mr Gore. The campaign against fast track, which would have deprived Congress of the authority to amend international trade agreements negotiated by the President, was spearheaded by

Richard Gephardt, the man seen as one of Mr Gore's chief rivals for the Democratic nomination for the presidency in the year 2000.

In all, as many Democrats as Republicans opposed the measure, arguing that the 1993 North American Free Trade Agreement had harmed American workers by depressing wages. Extra subsidies approved by Mr Clinton last week for US regions adversely affected by free trade agreements proved insufficient to win over sceptics. Pressure from constituents was cited by many in Congress as the reason why they could not change their vote — suggesting increased public suspicion of free trade. All US presidents, from Gerald Ford onwards, enjoyed fast track authority.

Mr Clinton tried to put a brave face on his defeat yesterday, insisting that he would reintroduce fast track legislation "at an appropriate time". White House sources had earlier said, however, that if the legislation did not pass now, it was unlikely to pass in the current presidency and trade officials said that Mr Clinton's ability to negotiate new free trade agreements with Latin America would be greatly impaired. — Mary Dejevsky

Netanyahu seeks British backing for Palestinian deal

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, flies to London tomorrow for talks with Tony Blair in what must feel like the calm between two storms.

He was immersed last night in a conflict between his Likud MPs and the rank and file about the way they select parliamentary candidates. The 3,000 conference delegates want the final say. MPs and ministers fear that Mr Netanyahu will use a conference of yes-men to eliminate dissent. They prefer American-style primaries.

Next week, Mr Netanyahu goes on to the United States, where he faces a showdown over legislation that would permit

only Orthodox rabbis to carry out conversions in Israel. American Jews, 80 per cent of whom are Reform or Conservative, denounce this as delegitimising their Judaism.

In London, Mr Netanyahu will try to convince the Government to back his proposal for negotiating a final settlement with the Palestinians straight away, rather than lumbering through a series of interim stages. "The more we linger and delay in getting to this fast-track negotiation... the longer we'll delay the peace," he said yesterday.

This idea has been roundly rejected by the Palestinians.

The Americans and moderate Arab states. They suspect that Mr Netanyahu will use it as a device for putting off painful decisions about the future of the occupied territories.

Amnesty International has called for the British government to raise with Mr Netanyahu the issue of torture of detainees — described by Israel as the use of "moderate physical pressure". In a letter to Tony Blair, Amnesty also expresses concern about a draft law, now before the Knesset, which would outlaw the right to compensation if civilians are killed or injured by the Israeli defence forces. — Eric Silver

Moi sets stage for Christmas poll in Kenya

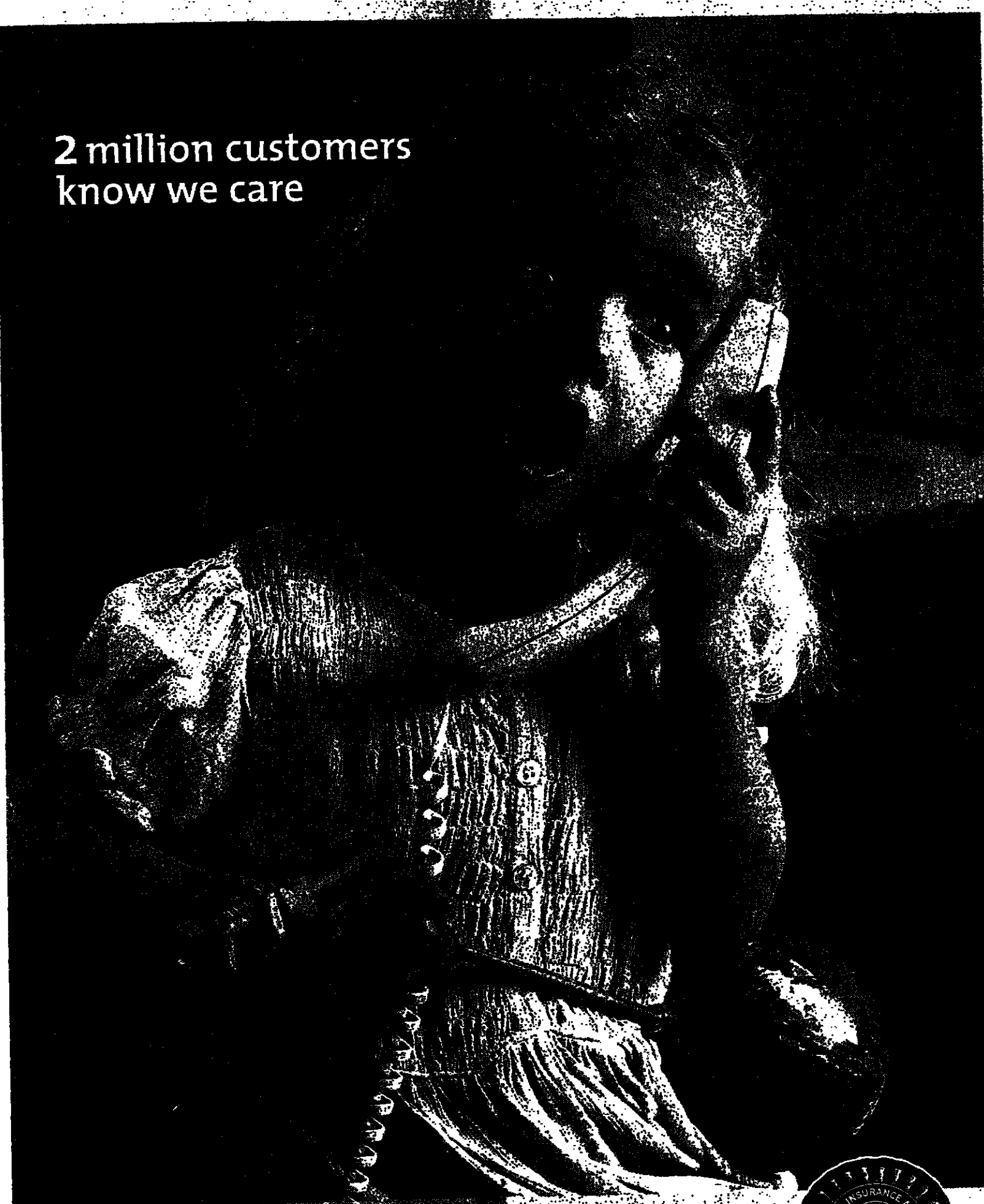
The Kenyan President, Daniel arap Moi, dissolved parliament yesterday, setting the stage for elections around Christmas when he will seek a final five-year term after two decades in power. A brief statement from the presidency in Nairobi ended weeks of guessing games.

President Moi, 73 and in power since 1978, is seen as the favourite against an array of candidates from the divided opposition. But predictions are risky because there is no reliable opinion research into the intentions of Kenya's 11 million

registered voters. Hardline opposition figures, led by veteran Kenneth Matiba, are advocating a boycott and disruption of the polls.

The long uncertainty about polling day has hit business and industry with potential foreign investors waiting for the outcome. Businesses, like ordinary Kenyans, also fear the violence associated with politics in Kenya. More than a dozen civilians and policemen were killed between May and October during pro-reform protests. Recent reforms are aimed at

creating a more level playing field and include a wholesale review of the constitution after the elections. But opposition leaders and pro-democracy campaigners fear the new rules will not be fairly observed by the provincial administration, an almost omnipotent corps which reports directly to the presidency. The hardline opposition rejected the reforms as cosmetic and is demanding a long postponement of the polls while a national unity government takes charge. — Reuters, Nairobi



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11/ENVIRONMENT

Crofters face threat from 'eco-warriors'

There are plans to set up Britain's first shrimp farm on the Hebridean island of Harris. But as Stephen Goodwin discovered, there are tensions between people struggling to make a living in the far north-west of Scotland and conservationists.

Roger Crofts, chief executive of the quango Scottish Natural Heritage, believes the idea that conservationists are making people an endangered species in the Highlands and Islands is a "tired myth".

He told the annual conference of the Scottish Crofters' Union (SCU) on Skye that the portrayal of environmentalists as outsiders driving around in

new Land-Rovers concerned only for the barnacle goose or the corncrake was simply a "caricature".

But the crofters remain deeply sceptical. The Edinburgh-based public servant may be "Croft" by name but community leaders remain to be convinced his organisation has turned crofter-friendly. "SNH are becoming intolerant in the way they are operating. They are becoming like bureaucratic eco-warriors," said Angus Graham, vice-convenor of the Western Isles Council and the SCU representative for the islands.

"It doesn't go down well that these people come out of university with their PhDs and come here and tell us what to do," Mr Graham said. The crofters maintain their ability to make even a partial living from the land is hit when areas are designated as of special scientific interest or scenic value.

With the plethora of protectionist labels comes a list of "don't do's", according to the SCU. These might curtail the number of sheep on a croft, the use of fertilisers, drainage work and other agricultural operations. However, Scottish Natural Heritage denied the existence of a list of prohibitions, claiming normal crofting activity could continue unhindered.

The controversy over a proposed shrimp farm on Harris illustrates just how easy it is to see SNH as hostile to economic development. Hebridean Shrimp Farms wants to build a facility for harvesting local and tropical shrimps. Europe offers a lucrative market for shrimps, currently supplied by Asia. The project would create 20 permanent jobs - some would be the type of jobs taken on by crofters to supplement their income.

The couple behind the idea, marine biologist Duncan May and chemist Joanne Murday, said the shrimp rearing method had been in use elsewhere since the 1970s and was accepted as environmentally friendly. SNH's initial concern is not over pollution but the visual impact.

David MacLennan, Western Isles manager for SNH, insisted the agency was not opposed to a shrimp farm but wanted to make sure it was in the right place. The company had been vague about its plans, he said.

One site mentioned in informal discussions, Northton, is in a national scenic area. It is prime "machair", a type of dune grassland, recognised as internationally important and virtually confined in Europe to NW Scotland and parts of Ireland. The farm could cover some five acres of machair with pools and sheds, according to

Mr MacLennan. "The loss of prime machair habitat on that scale would be significant," he said. It is home to birds such as redshank, dunlin and oyster catchers. But to job-starved Harris, shrimp production could offer a similar lifeline to salmon farming.

Mr Graham finds SNH's priorities mind-boggling. "To object to a shrimp farm on Harris and to allow a bloody funicular railway up Cairn Gorm is unbelievable," he said. Islanders say that if SNH keeps trying to stop development and regulate crofting, Harris will become "a wilderness".

Over on the mainland at Inverasdale in Wester Ross, crofters are opposing a proposal to designate 3,000 acres of their hill grazing as a site of special scientific interest (SSSI).

The heritage quango wants to safeguard the mosses and

lichens of what is a rare blanket bog. But crofters fear there will be restrictions on stock numbers making it difficult for young people to build up a holding. "This type of thing could drive even more people to work away," said grazings clerk Hamish MacDonald.

Typically a croft is about 10 acres of land around a cottage with a much larger area of common grazing beyond. There are some 11,000 crofting households in North-west Scotland of whom less than 8,000 are active. That leaves about one-third of crofts not being worked.

Wildlife tourism seemed to be the biggest opportunity the SNH chief foresaw, with novel ideas such as charging for access to bird hides. But the crofters themselves plainly prefer the farmer's basic satisfaction of livestock rearing and harvest - shrimps included.



Fighting for survival: A tiger fends off a rival, but the animal's greatest threat may come from humans
Photograph: Anup Shah, *Land of the Tigers*/BBC Books

Tiger products still being used in Chinese medicines

Despite several years of publicity and campaigning against the trade in endangered wildlife, drugs and potions containing tiger parts - or claiming to do so - are still widely used in Oriental medicine around the world, an undercover inquiry has found.

Staff from the Environmental Investigation Agency, based in London, visited pharmacies offering traditional Chinese medicines in the Netherlands, Britain, the United States and Japan, accompanied by hidden cameras.

They found them openly on sale in Tokyo, Yokohama, Amsterdam and New York but not in any British city, suggesting that efforts by UK police forces to crack down on the trade are having an effect.

There are thought to be only about 5,000 tigers left in the wild, most of them in India, compared to roughly 100,000 at the beginning of the century. It is estimated that one or more tigers are poached in India every day, with the demand for medicinal products being the key driver behind the illegal killing.

In Amsterdam, investigators found tiger bone products on sale in five out of six Chinese pharmacies, in pill, liquid and plaster form. Pharmacists identified mainland China as the source of the medicines.

In Tokyo and Yokohama, two-thirds of pharmacies in a telephone survey carried tiger

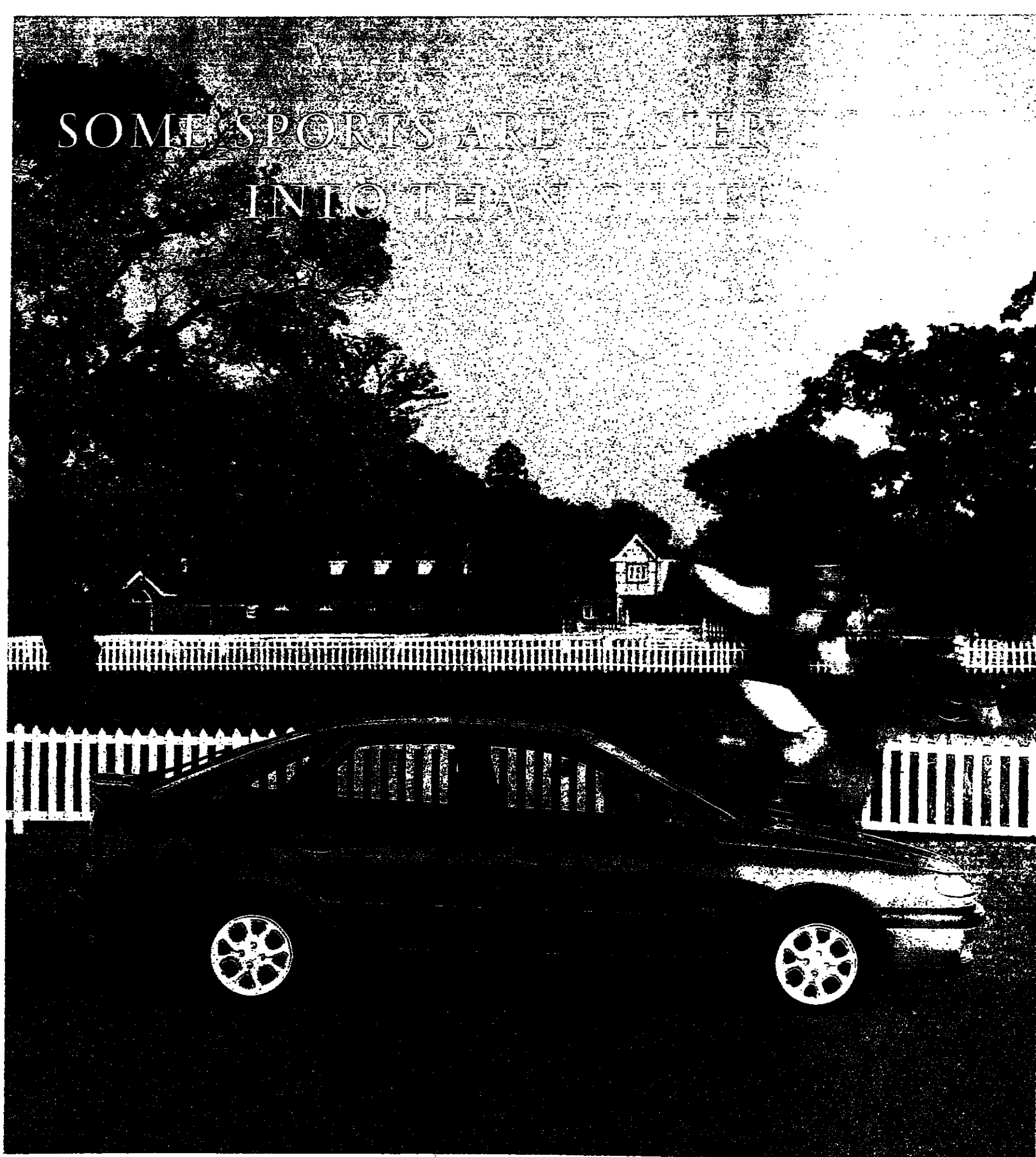
products, up from 48 per cent in a similar survey two years ago. The figure was even higher in New York, where in February an investigation revealed 80 per cent of pharmacies sold tiger products.

However, none of the shops surveyed in the UK - in London, Glasgow and Edinburgh - sold tiger products, and in several cases pharmacists properly advised undercover investigators that trade in such products was illegal.

In traditional Chinese medicine, ground up tiger bones and other organs are believed to provide remedies for ailments such as rheumatism and arthritis, digestive illnesses and impotency. They are incorporated in tonics, pills and pastes. There is also a trade in skins, teeth, claws and skulls used as ornaments.

Meanwhile, after last year's fall in the price of seal penises, the market is now rising. At a recent fisheries exposition in Peking, a Norwegian company sold its entire 1997 stock of 6,000 at prices of \$40 for the long ones (45cm) and \$15-\$20 for the short ones (20cm), the Norwegian newspaper *Bergens Tidende* reported yesterday. The buyer, from Singapore, also secured an option on all the seal penises that the company can supply next year. They will be used in the manufacture of a remedy designed to stimulate sexual potency.

— Nicholas Schoon, *Environment Correspondent*



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Bonn boosts Turkish hopes of joining EU

British plans to stage a grand 27-nation summit for leaders of countries seeking European Union membership were boosted last night after Bonn dropped its veto on the inclusion of Turkey. Katherine Butler in Brussels reports on the German breakthrough.

Britain, which takes over the EU presidency in January, now has majority support among its EU partners for inviting Turkey into a pan-European "conference" designed as a consolation prize for applicants who will not be included in the next wave of

the EU's enlargement. Greece remains implacably opposed to anything which might be construed by Ankara as a ticket to join the EU membership queue, but in a move interpreted by British officials as a breakthrough, the German foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, said Bonn was now dropping its opposition.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, welcomed the German change of heart, saying it reflected the "gathering recognition that Turkey must be a part of such a European conference". "We have always taken the view that it is important to encourage those in Turkey who see Turkey's vocation as European," he added.

Ankara first applied to join the then EEC in 1963 but most member states are deeply uncomfortable about encouraging its membership given Turkey's size, poverty, religious make-up and human rights record.

Resolving how to give Turkey the status it deserves within "the European family" without raising false hopes has become urgent now that EU membership negotiations with Cyprus are due to start in March. The Turks have threatened to annex northern Cyprus if negotiations proceed exclusively with the Greek Cypriots.

Mr Cook said Turkey would have to demonstrate "very substantial further steps" on its economy and human rights record but this would be easier through a process of dialogue.



Wild goose chase: Young women in traditional costume take part in the annual 'Miss Gooseherd' pageant in the Dutch town of Coevorden yesterday
Photograph: AP

Swiss banks widen access to accounts

Swiss banks bowed to criticism yesterday and made it easier to find dormant accounts from the Holocaust era.

The Swiss Bankers Association said it was publishing a list of 3,687 foreign names in three newspapers - in yesterday's editions of *The New York Times* and the international edition of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of Switzerland, as well as in Friday's edition of the Israeli paper *Yedioth Ahronoth*.

The foreign names were first disclosed on 29 October along with more than 10,000 Swiss names on accounts that have been without instructions from their owners since the end of the Second World War.

The association also has reverted to an easier system on the Internet, allowing viewers to see all the names. — AP

Brussels on alert after race riots

Belgium's capital was tense and on high alert yesterday after a weekend of clashes between police and North African immigrants sparked by police shooting dead a suspected drug dealer of Moroccan origin.

"The forces of order are present in large numbers and will remain in place," the interior minister, Johan Vande Lanotte, said after a crisis meeting of civic leaders. "The security measures will continue".

Anderlecht, a poor district of Brussels where immigrants make up about 60 per cent of the population, erupted in violence on Friday night after police killed Said Charki, 24, as he tried to escape arrest. He was found to be in possession of 50 grammes of heroin.

The disturbances continued on Saturday and during a demonstration against racism on Sunday, when members of the marginalised and largely ignored North African immigrant population in the capital

vented their pent-up anger. More than 170 people were arrested, petrol bombs and paving stones thrown, shop windows smashed and cars overturned.

By yesterday afternoon, all the people arrested had been released, prompting the Mayor of Brussels, Francois-Xavier De Donnea, to criticise the public prosecutor's office for a lack of rigour, given that some of them were found with iron bars and bottles of petrol.

About 200,000 immigrants, mostly of North African origin, live in and around Brussels. Many see themselves as much Belgian as North African, but they have been deprived of voting rights and find themselves forced to the fringes of society.

Their problems are aggravated by the fact that many are francophone, putting them on a collision course with the Dutch speaking population in Brussels and the north of the country.

Poland's new leader pledges an era of moral renewal

Promising a "moral renewal" and fundamental economic reforms, Solidarity's new Prime Minister yesterday served notice that his four-year term will focus on eradicating the last remnants of communism in Poland.

In an inaugural address of the new Sejm, Jerzy Buzek, the 57-year-old chemistry professor entrusted with the new government, sought to invoke the values that bound the anti-communist alliance together.

"There will not be a strong Poland without moral order, without patriotism, or respect for the Christian roots of our civilisation. Today we want to make up for the time that was wasted," he declared, in a reference to the four years that Solidarity had spent in the wilderness. The remaining state-owned industries would be privatised by 2001, Mr Buzek pledged. Coal mining and heavy

industry would be restructured.

The government's aim was that Poland's economy should be based on private property, with state support for a newly-emerging middle class. "We want a free economy with chances for everyone," the Prime Minister told MPs ahead of last night's confidence vote.

Mr Buzek said his government would do away with unnecessary licences, cut corporate taxes and "remove barriers limiting home and foreign investment". He identified the economic priorities as promoting growth, curbing inflation and reducing the budget deficit.

Former communists criticised the Prime Minister for being short of specifics. "The speech contained many sensible goals, but the explanation of how to achieve them was foggy," their leader, Jozef Oleksy, said.

— Imre Karacs

Holbrooke starts Cyprus visit

The United States embarked on an initiative yesterday for settling the problem of war-divided Cyprus with the first visit by Richard Holbrooke, recently named President Bill Clinton's special envoy for Cyprus.

Mr Holbrooke's deputy, Tom Müller, the US Special Coordinator for Cyprus, opened the initiative with separate meetings with President Glafcos Clerides, the Greek Cypriot leader, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktaş.

A State Department spokesman said that Mr Holbrooke felt it was time to bring the two

leaders together "with no set agenda to see if they can have an informal discussion".

Western diplomats, insisting on anonymity, said Mr Holbrooke's main thrust will be to try to arrange the participation of both sides in early negotiations with the European Union.

Mr Holbrooke, chief architect of the 1995 Bosnia peace accords, sees the prospect of Cyprus joining the EU as a catalyst for the reunification of the island. Cyprus has been unofficially partitioned since Turkey invaded and occupied its northern third in 1974.

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Unlikely bedfellows unite to preserve 'La Difference'

Boutros Boutros-Ghali will make his comeback this week, as secretary-general of Francophonie, the French version of the Commonwealth. It was founded in 1986 to defend French language and culture, but 11 years later you no longer have to speak French to get in. At its summit this week, Moldova will become the newest member, and Nigeria has been invited. Our Paris Correspondent asks: what is going on?

BY JOHN LICHFIELD

It is somewhat rare to hear the language of Molière spoken on the streets of Lagos. The same is true of Cairo, Sofia, Bucharest and, increasingly, Hanoi. But they are all capitals of countries which belong to, or wish to belong to, "la Francophonie", a loose grouping of 49 countries, provinces and territories devoted to the promotion and protection of French language and culture.

The leaders of members of Francophonie, and would-be members, will meet in Hanoi this week for the organisation's seventh summit. They will elect a secretary-general (almost certainly Mr Boutros-Ghali) and, for the first time, give the organisation a formal headquarters and secretariat in Paris.

Officially, Francophonie is being extended and "re-positioned" to resist the global domination of the English language and Anglo-Saxon (that is, American) culture. Unofficially, it seems in danger of becoming a gathering ground for malcontents and misfits.

What can the military regime in Nigeria, suspended from the Commonwealth for human-rights violations, bring to the rearguard action against Anglo-cultural imperialism? Not much. Officially, Lagos has been invited to take part because it has promised to promote the teaching of French.

"In truth, Nigeria is there because it is a pleasingly rude gesture to Britain", said Philippe Moreau-Defarges, professor of international relations at the prestigious foreign think tank, the Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI).

But is not France the country which invented human rights? Is it not self-defeating that an organisation created to defend France's cultural contribution to the world should chase the favours of states such as Nigeria? "Maybe," said Mr Moreau-Defarges. "But France is also the country of political intrigue, the country of Richelieu."

Romania, already a member, speaks a language related to French. But what of Bulgaria, Poland and Albania, expected to join next year? Officially, these countries are signing up because they support France's quest to preserve cultural diversity in the face of the English-language domination of everything from movies to the Internet.

This is a legitimate, even laudable, goal. But French officials recognise privately that the citizens of these countries are far more interested in learning English than French. Their governments are joining Fran-

cophonie because (with the exception of Poland) they are on the fringes of European integration and hope belonging to the French cultural club will buy them French support in the negotiations in Brussels. This has, however, proved of limited value so far.

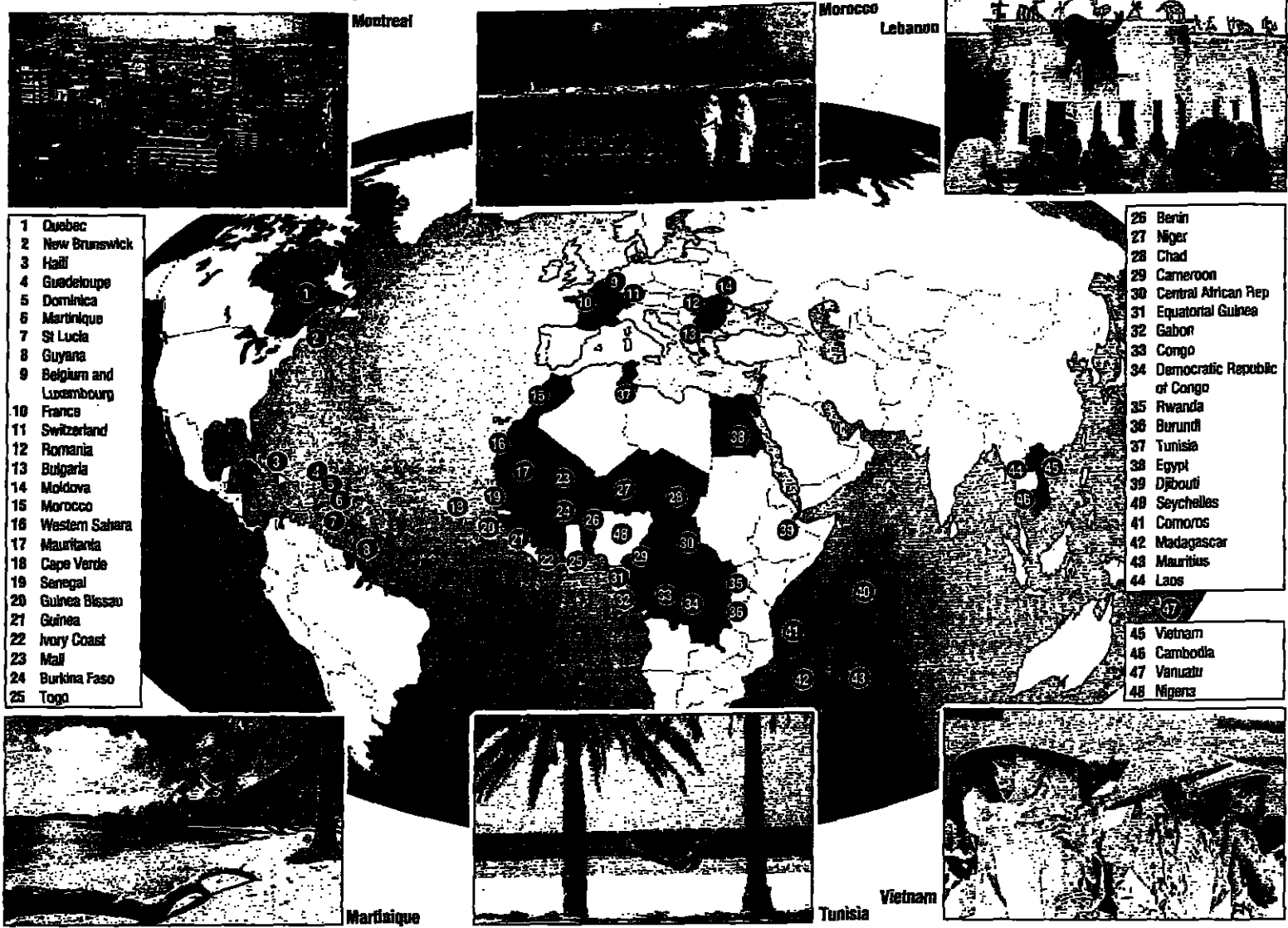
The summit in Hanoi, from Friday to Sunday, will discuss two declarations on the promotion of economic ties. It will also consider ways of challenging the English language domination of the information revolution. One suggestion will be the creation of a "virtual university" in the French language, by using the existing Internet or an especially dedicated network of computers.

But the single most important piece of business will be the selection of Francophonie's first full-time leader. Mr Boutros-Ghali, the Egyptian statesman deposed as United Nations secretary-general last year, has the support of France, Belgium and Quebec, the three largest players. He is a high-profile name. Just as usefully, his election will get up the nose of the United States, which fought to have him removed from the UN.

In an interview with the French magazine *Le Point*, Mr Boutros-Ghali said Francophonie had "no future" if it stuck to its original conception: the defence of French as a global language. "It must turn to defending cultural diversity and multi-lingualism, which constitute the true quality of the human heritage."

Mr Moreau-Defarges says this point is accepted by Paris, even if it is, in a sense, an admission of defeat: "Any hope that you could build an international organisation around French alone cannot be sustained in the modern world."

LE MONDE FRANCOPHONE



VIETNAM PLAYS HOST TO ITS OLD ADVERSARY

The ghosts of Dien Bien Phu will finally be laid to rest when Vietnam hosts the annual summit of Francophone countries for the first time this weekend. For France, the event is an important step towards re-establishing French as an Asian language. For Vietnam, it is another milestone in its rehabilitation as a "normal" country.

From tomorrow, before the summit opens, President Jacques Chirac will make a two-day state visit, the first by a French president since Vietnam ceased to be a French colony. Embarrassingly for France, members of the Vietnamese Catholic community complained yesterday of the brutal repression of demonstrations at the weekend against the confiscation of property.

France has given Vietnam £7.5m towards the cost of organising the summit. The biggest single expense was the construction of a new conference centre in Hanoi, at a cost of £3m. Somewhat to French chagrin, the centre will also serve as the venue of the Anglophone summit of the Association of South-East Asian Nations next year.

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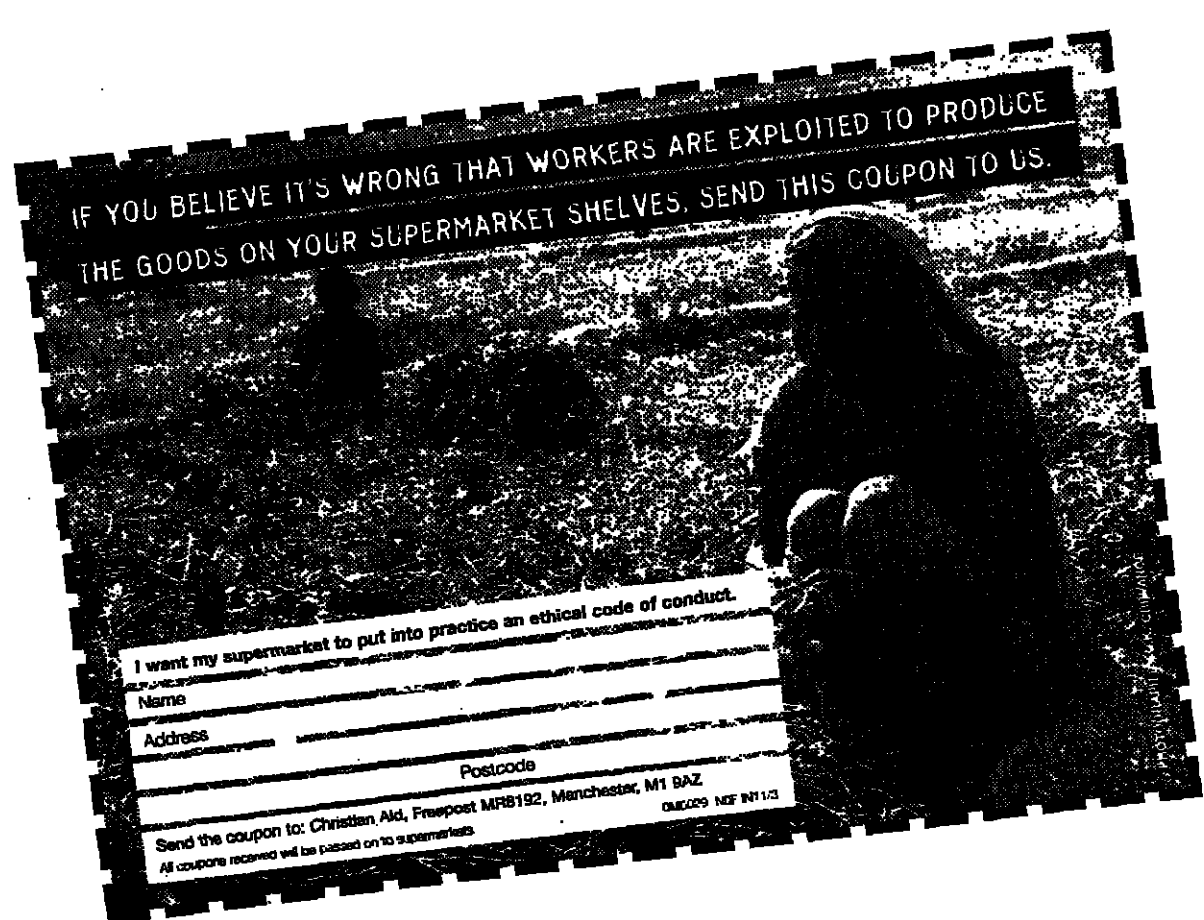
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Students 'fed up' in clearing mess

A number of universities failed to fill degree course vacancies during the "clearing" period because of their slipshod, unprofessional attitude towards applicants, according to a report due to be published this week.

Students who lost a place at the university of their choice because they had failed to achieve the necessary A-level grades, found themselves subjected to further misery at the hands of inexperienced, untrained staff at places with vacancies.

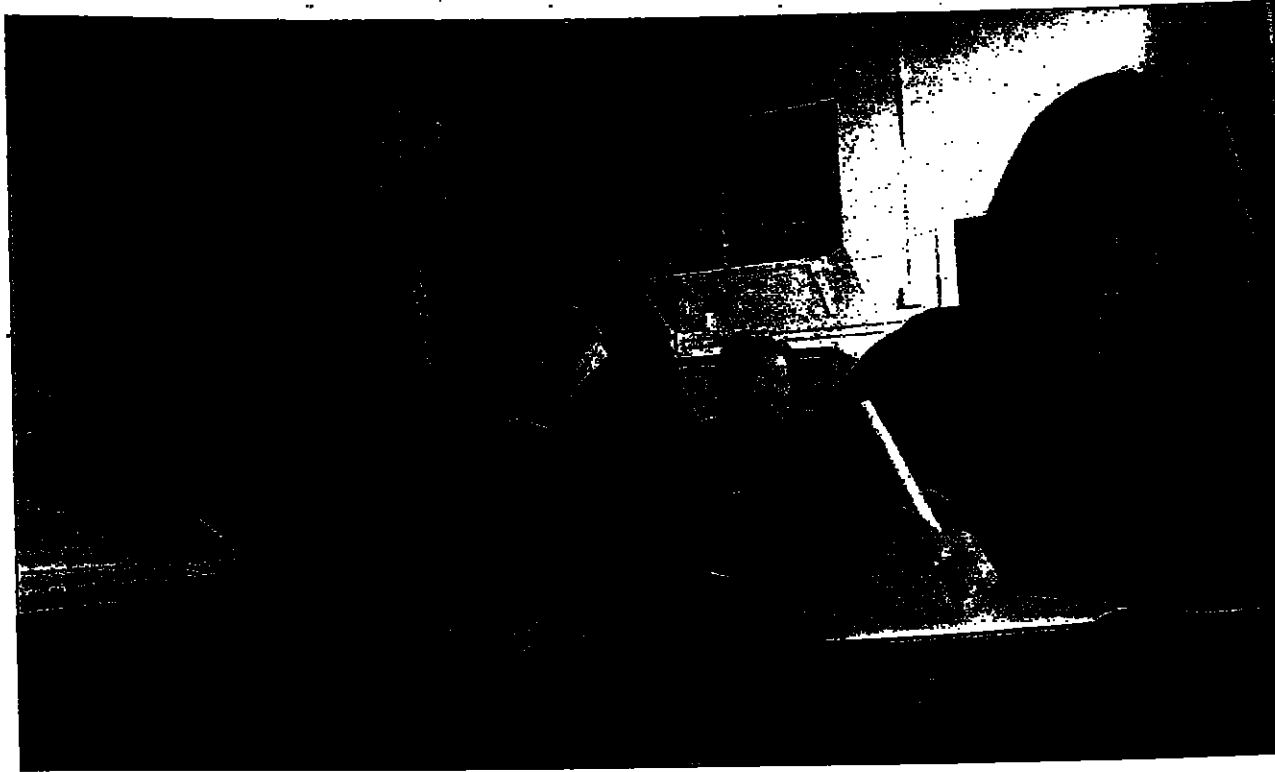
The survey, conducted by Riley and Greyling, a Manchester-based marketing company, said that some students who responded within minutes of seeing places advertised in newspapers were fobbed off

on the telephone by staff who were "not very knowledgeable or helpful". Many were told spaces had already been filled or that they needed specific A grades rather than the equivalent in points.

The "snapshot" survey, claimed to be the first to examine what school leavers experienced both before and after the clearing period, was conducted among students in London, the Midlands and the North of England. Careers teachers said colleges should be more aware of the "stressful time" callers to their hotlines were experiencing.

The complete survey findings are to be disclosed at Clearing '97 to be launched in Nottingham tomorrow.

— John Izbicki



Place of change: Russ Wallace, head of Blakelaw school in Newcastle, helping pupils. The school is among those being given a fresh start and Mr Wallace said the initiative had spurred it into action. Photograph: Michael Scott

Blunkett says 'naming and shaming' schools works

David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, said yesterday that 'naming and shaming' poor schools works and he was prepared to do it again. Judith Judd, Education Editor, examines mixed reactions to his announcement.

Of the 18 schools named by the Government last May because they were not improving quickly enough, one has now been taken off the list of those labelled failing by inspectors and three more are likely to be removed by Christmas.

The rest remain in "special measures" — the regime of intensive monitoring for schools found to be failing — but most are showing reasonable signs of improvement. Almost half the improved schools have new head teachers.

The closure of one school, Handsworth Wood School for Boys in Birmingham, already scheduled by the local authority, will go ahead. Two others, Mostyn Gardens primary in Lambeth, south London, which will have a new head in January, and Selhurst High in Croydon, where the authority is trying to dismiss 15 teachers, are still causing serious concern.

Local authorities are reviewing the viability of two schools: Dulwich High in Southwark and Earl Marshal in Sheffield.

Mr Blunkett dismissed the reaction from teachers' unions. "We are talking about giving people simple basic facts about the state of education at their children's schools. It is a moral matter. Some people know about their children's schools and some don't. If they know, they remove their children."

Schools were on the list he said because they had been in special measures for at least two years and were being allowed to drift. "Without our action, none of the schools would have improved at the rate which I have described. Otherwise they would already have been doing so."

Ministers spent £90,000 sending consultants into the 18 schools. Stephen Byers, the school standards minister, said: "Today we can celebrate success and name and acclaim these schools that had drifted into long-term failure but which

have now turned themselves round."

One school which has improved dramatically said the policy had played little part in the changes. Another welcomed the intervention.

Jean Millham, head of Morningside primary school in Hackney, east London, which has improved so much that it has been given a clean bill of health, said she would never forgive the Government for upsetting children at the school on the day it published the list. The school had been improving long before the naming and shaming happened. "It just knocked everyone back and hurt parents, children and teachers. I hope they will learn this is not the way to do it," she said.

Extra money and expert advice had simply helped to speed up a programme which was already in place, Ms Millham said.

However, Russ Wallace, head of Blakelaw school in Newcastle, said the school had been spurred into action and would reopen with a new name and refurbished buildings next September under the Government's "fresh start" proposals.

William Atkinson, head of the Phoenix School given a fresh start by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and sent to Blakelaw by the Government, "has been a driving force in the work we have done", Mr Wallace said.

The school had introduced new literacy programmes and had formed links with well-known companies to design a curriculum relevant to the world of work. There may be some staff changes. Mr Wallace, who is on a temporary contract, will himself be applying for a job.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "Today's announcement is a shallow attempt to give credence to a political stunt by the Government. The very fact that other failing schools which were not named and shamed are also making progress demonstrates that the Government has been engaged in a highly dubious exercise."

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, called on ministers to drop the naming and shaming policy, saying, "It seriously undermined support from teachers for the new government's policies and promoted anger rather than confidence."

PROGRESS REPORT

School/LEA	Comment
Coming out of special measures	
1. Morningside (primary) Hackney	Off special measures
2. Abbey Farm (Middle) Norfolk	Off next term
3. Lea Green (special) Waltham Forest	Likely to be off next term
4. Lilian Baylis (secondary) Lambeth	Likely to be off next term
Fresh start and other major developments	
5. Blakelaw (Secondary) Newcastle	Proposed fresh start Sept 98
6. Handsworth Wood Boys (Secondary) Birmingham	School will close August 98
7. South Benwell (Primary) Newcastle	New head in place
8. Our Lady of Fatima (Secondary) (GM) Liverpool	New head in place
Reasonable progress	
9. Kelsey Park (Secondary) (GM) Bromley	Quality improved.
10. Ashburton (Secondary) Croydon	Quality improved. New head
11. St Mary of the Angels (Primary) Westminster	Quality improving
12. Upbury Manor (Secondary) Kent	15 teachers left
13. Southfields (Secondary) (GM) Kent	Quality improving. Sec of State to appoint additional governors
14. Rams Episcopal (Primary) Hackney	Quality improving
LEA considering viability	
15. Dulwich High (Secondary) Southwark	Long-term viability in doubt
16. Earl Marshal (Secondary) Sheffield	Review by end of the year
Serious concerns	
17. Mostyn Gardens (Primary) Lambeth	New head and deputy to start
18. Selhurst High (Secondary) Croydon	Competency procedures against 15 teachers ongoing

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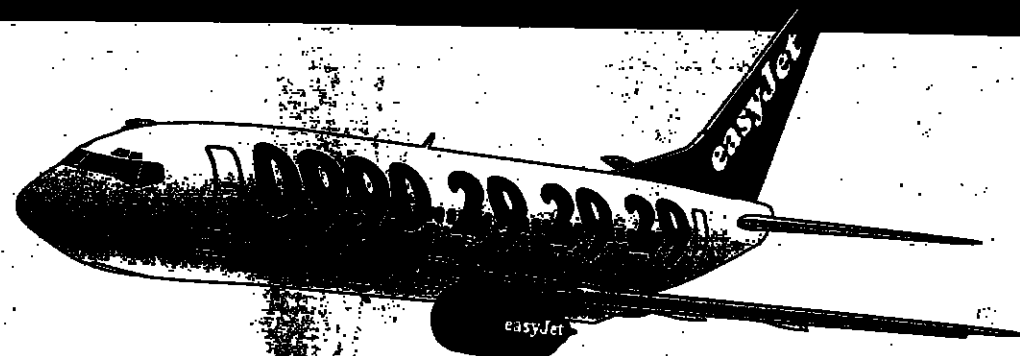
The last Tory chancellor had the brilliant idea of raising more taxes by doubling the amount of airport tax to £10 per departing passenger. Of course most Tory politicians rarely travel anything else other than **BA Club class** and they have apparently missed the biggest revolution in air travel since the introduction of the jet aircraft.

This revolution is called deregulation and the product is the low cost airline. **BA** is so worried that they are thinking of starting one themselves. Their intentions must be to eliminate companies like **easyJet** and then raise the fares again, but in the meantime their lobbying powers came to the rescue.

A far more effective way to make **easyJet** fares less attractive is for the **taxman** to keep a huge percentage of it in the form of the air passenger duty (APD). This £10 could make the difference for one of **easyJet's** passengers as to whether to fly or not. **BA's** lucrative customers who travel *Club class* would not even notice the difference of £10 as most of them don't even pay out of their own pocket.

To add insult to injury the **Advertising Standards Authority** has ruled that the tax must be included in the fare advertised. This works against airlines like **easyJet** that offer incredibly low one way fares, for example our famous £29 one way to Scotland will now be advertised at £39. **easyJet** will be the first to comply with this ruling but will never stop arguing that this flat rate tax is against the consumers interest.

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The cough that nearly killed our baby

Vaccination against whooping cough is now so widespread that doctors may fail to diagnose the disease. But, in a small baby, it can still be highly dangerous, as Emma Houghton found out.

When our seven-week-old son, Zachary, first got the runny nose and persistent cough that was going round the family, we weren't too concerned. Minor coughs and colds seem to be a feature of life with three small children, especially once the eldest starts school.

After a few days, however, Zachary's cough became more alarming. One moment he appeared entirely well; the next, he was seized by a fit of violent choking, going blue from lack of oxygen and bringing up mouthfuls of sticky white phlegm. These paroxysms became more severe, occurring every half hour or so and lasting up to a minute, and he'd often be sick afterwards. But the GP seemed unconcerned, prescribing antibiotics for what she loosely referred to as a "chest infection", and assuring us that it was fine to go off on holiday as planned.

We spent a week in Suffolk watching Zachary deteriorate. He became quiet and lethargic, his coughing fits longer and more violent. The antibiotics did nothing except add five days of diarrhoea to his misery, and he quickly became dehydrated in the hot July weather. The journey home was peppered with emergency stops when Zachary went lifeless and floppy after a coughing attack. On several occasions we held him upside down and thumped him on the back, thinking he was choking on mucus.

Despite our graphic accounts of his symptoms, two further doctors failed to find anything wrong; one laughed openly when we said we were scared our son might die during one of his coughing fits. Slowly, Zachary

did recover, but it took several months, and he dropped to the bottom of his weight range and has remained there ever since: he is now two-and-a-half.

Just as the trauma of the whole experience began to recede, I came across a description of whooping cough in an old child care manual. The penny dropped. Zachary's symptoms were classic, even down to the absence of a whoop, rare in babies. For children under the age of three months, whooping cough can be severe; it might have killed him.

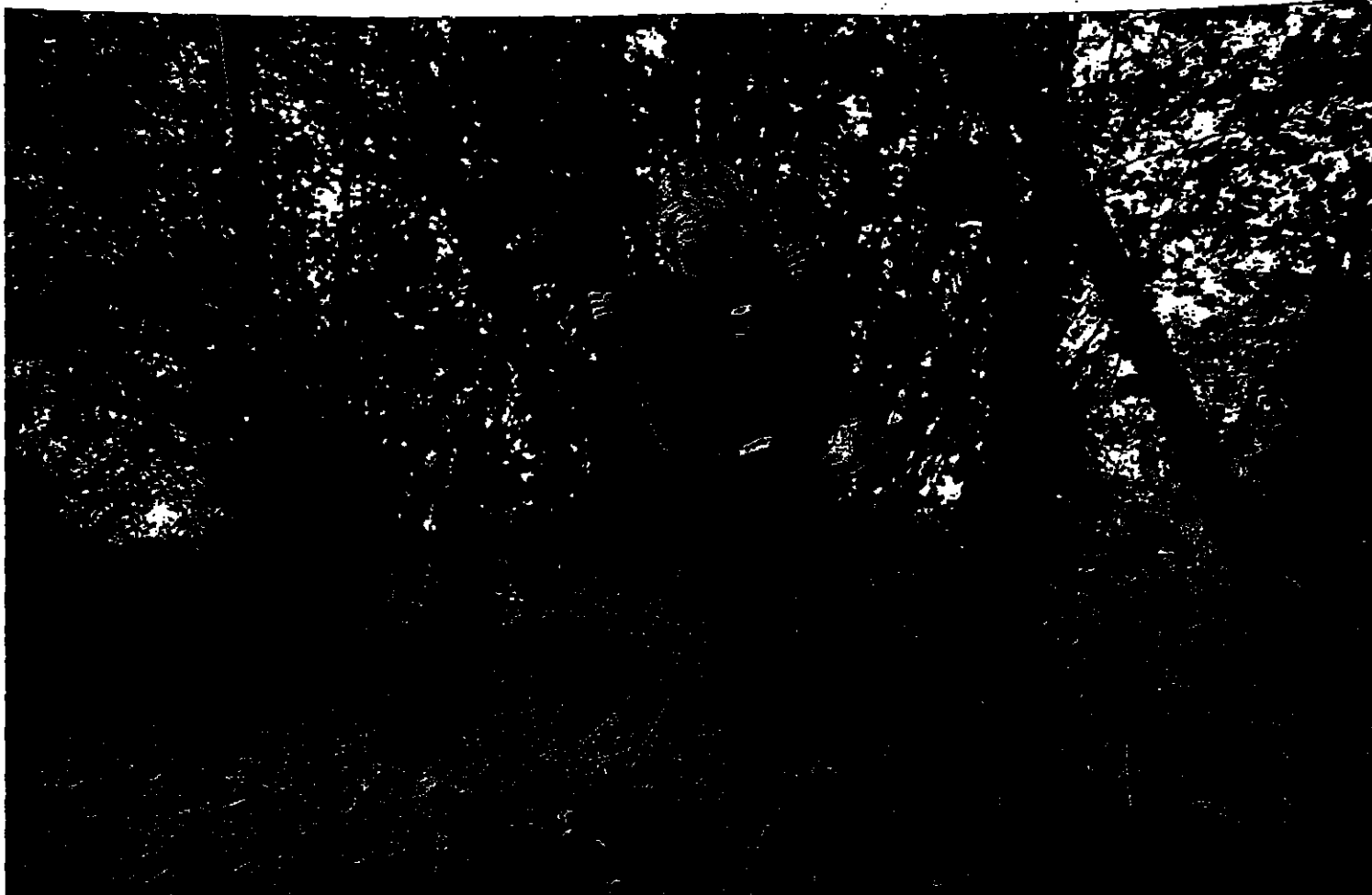
So why did the doctors - who eventually agreed with my diagnosis - get it so badly wrong? Probably because the disease is now comparatively rare, so they aren't familiar with its symptoms; and because mass immunisation has lulled them into a false sense of security.

Whooping cough, or pertussis, is usually fairly mild in adults and older children, especially those who have been vaccinated. It is caused by a bacterium, spread via airborne droplets. After several weeks' incubation, the illness starts with a mild cough, sneezing, runny nose, and fever. The cough becomes more persistent and severe, especially at night, and can provoke vomiting; in small babies it may temporarily cause them to stop breathing. Recurrent vomiting can cause dehydration.

Little can be offered in way of treatment, beyond antibiotics early on, to reduce infectivity and shorten the duration of the illness.

However, more than half of reported cases strike those under three months old, where the disease can be life-threatening. Possible complications include pneumonia, brain damage and collapsed lungs, leading to death in one in 200, and occasionally permanent damage in survivors.

Whooping cough used to be a common disease - up to three-quarters of the population succumbed to it at some point - but immunisation has brought the incidence



On a high: two years on, Zachary appears none the worse for his alarming episode of whooping cough

Photograph: Susannah Binney/ApeX

down from around 100,000 cases a year to a reported 2,000 in 1972. Despite scares in the Seventies and Eighties associating the vaccine with brain damage in children, whooping cough immunisation recently hit record levels of 93 per cent of the population.

But Douglas Jenkinson, a GP from Nottinghamshire, believes that the pertussis vaccine currently given to babies at two, three and four months old is not as effective as most people assume. His 10-year study of 500 cases of whooping cough in his general practice of 10,000, published in the *British Medical Journal*, led him to conclude that vaccination is usually only fully effective for the first year, and that by the time children reach school, it provides only around 50 per cent protection. For small babies, the most common route of infection is via older siblings who have picked up pertussis at school. Joshua, Zachary's older brother, had ghastly coughing fits for a month. In retrospect,

it seems obvious that he was the first to contract the disease.

Jenkinson also believes that whooping cough is far more prevalent than the reported number of cases would suggest, and his suspicions are backed up by research across the Atlantic. A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* revealed that nearly a quarter of adult US patients complaining of a persistent cough were later found to be suffering from whooping cough. US health officials estimate that only 10 per cent of pertussis cases are ever reported, partly because doctors fail to diagnose it.

Much the same situation seems to be occurring here. The idea that vaccination provides universal protection tends to lull most doctors into a false sense of security, believes Jenkinson, who estimates that he now diagnoses 100 times more cases of whooping cough than the average GP. Faced with a patient complaining of a bad cough, most doctors commonly at-

tribute the symptoms to other chest problems, such as bronchitis, bronchiolitis, and even asthma.

But even when pertussis is suspected, it can be difficult to reach a definitive diagnosis. "Whooping cough is difficult to diagnose, and most GPs have little direct experience of it," says Jenkinson. "Although the 'tune' of a typical spasm of whooping cough is unforgettable, the doctor is unlikely to hear a typical spasm in any given patient."

Even when doctors do make the connection, proving it can be difficult. According to Dr Ruth Matthews, head of the Pertussis Reference Laboratory in Manchester, which attempts to diagnose whooping cough from samples, only 60 per cent of cases are successfully cultured. "There are cases of whooping cough which are almost certainly genuine but which culture negative," she says, "but a clinical diagnosis from the symptoms alone is never definite."

The result is that many mini-epi-

demics pass more or less unnoticed. In our village, we discovered at least two other families whose children had suffered similar symptoms at around the same time that Zachary had been ill, and, like us, had not even had the possibility of pertussis considered. A mother from a nearby town whose school-age twins were probably the source of the infection had been told by her GP that it was "pseudo whooping cough" and not as serious: without a solid diagnosis, the school was unable to warn other parents of a possible outbreak.

The good news is that most children who get whooping cough, even those suffering a severe case, are unlikely to experience any long-term ill effects. Zachary, thankfully, seems none the worse for his early trauma; as his parents, however, we're left with a more lingering legacy - anger at his misdiagnosis, and considerable guilt that we didn't trust our instincts and push harder for help when he was clearly so very ill.

VITAL SIGNS

This mite get rid of them House dust mites, a common cause of asthma, can be eliminated using eucalyptus oil, according to the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*. Though washing bedding removes 95 per cent of the allergen, the temperature needs to be quite hot - higher than 55C - to kill the bugs. Soaking in a weak solution of eucalyptus is just as effective.

Hope for the brittle An on-the-spot test to identify women at high risk of brittle bone disease will soon be available. At present, the one in three post-menopausal women who develops osteoporosis rarely gets picked up in time to prevent fractures. The new test, Osteocalc, involves GPs taking a small sample of urine.

Sunflowers to the rescue? Evening primrose oil, widely used to treat of premenstrual syndrome and breast pain, may soon be harvested from sunflowers, thanks to genetic engineers at Bristol University. Gamolenic acid (GLA), the active ingredient, is extracted with difficulty from the tiny seeds of the evening primrose plant - so it is expensive.

Having isolated the gene responsible for the enzyme that makes GLA, and introduced it into tobacco plants, the scientists found the tobacco made GLA. They are now trying the same thing with sunflowers.

Incredible shrinking kids Children are taller in the morning, and some decrease in height during the day by more than 1cm - the "gravity effect" - say researchers in Southampton. They studied 53 children aged three to 11. Writing in *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, they point out that children's growth causes great anxiety. Clinics recording their height should always measure it at the same time of day.

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'I understand your anger, Derek. You and generations before you have had your faith in a pill for every ill reinforced by Dr Fanners and his idiosyncratic prescribing. But I'm saying, let's challenge those beliefs'

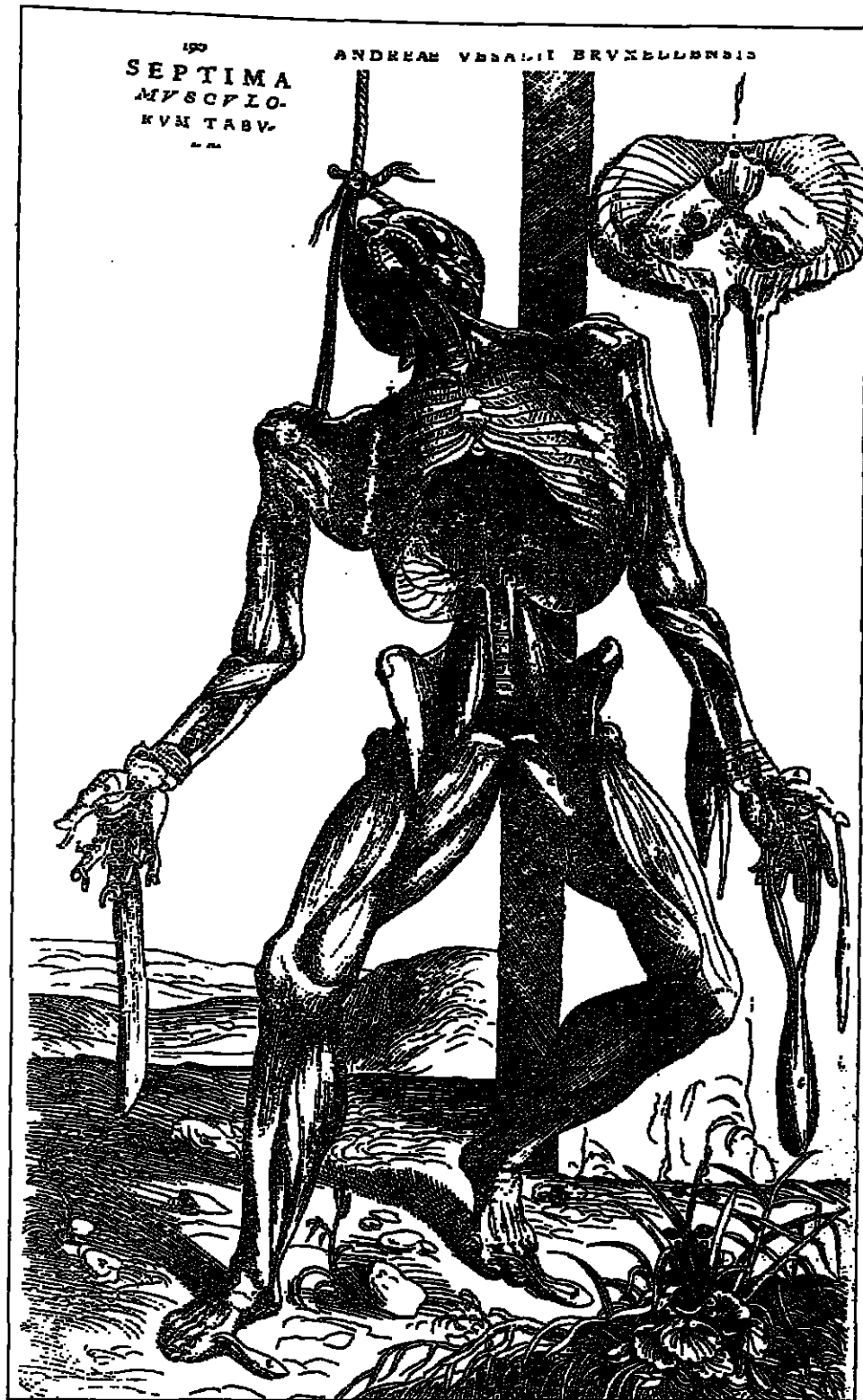
"Hello Mr Pitt. What can I do for you?"
"Where's Dr Fanners?"
"He's retired, I'm afraid."
"But I always see Dr Fanners."
"As I said, he's no longer with us - but I've taken over his patients."
"Then you should know all about me."
"Yes, well, from what I've gleaned, you've been down our way rather a lot."
"Eh?"
"This is your 20th visit to the doctor this year."
"So who's counting?"
"Actually, the computer does it. I press 'A' next to your name and it gives the number of attendances this year."
"Why would you need to know that?"
"Well, on average men of your age attend twice a year, so either you must be pretty sick or..."
"Or?"
"Um - or there's a complex web of psychosocial issues triggering your attendance."
"I want some antibiotics for my cold."
"I see."
"Good. So if you'll let me have them, I'll leave you in peace with your computer."
"Mmm. Why do you think you need antibiotics?"
"Because I've got a cold. Are you deaf?"
"No, it's just that I wouldn't normally give you antibiotics for a cold."
"Oh wouldn't you? Well perhaps you could explain why Dr Fanners always gave me antibiotics for my colds, and I always got better."
"It's called association."
"What?"
"Ninety-nine per cent of drivers involved in car accidents are wearing shoes. Does that mean that wearing shoes makes you crash the car? Would you ban shoes on the strength of it?"
"You've lost me completely now."
"The point is that just because something preceded something else, it doesn't mean it caused it. You would have got better from your colds just as quickly without the antibiotics. Trust me."
"You think you're so clever, don't you?"
"Well, doctors are in the top 0.1 per cent of the academic population..."
"If you're so clever, perhaps you could explain why I always got antibiotics from Dr Fanners, who I presume was also in the top 0.1 per cent of the academic population."
"Not towards the end he wasn't."
"Sorry?"
"Nothing. It's just that Dr Fanners trained in an era when antibiotics were seen as cure-alls. Magic bullets, if you like. And despite the overwhelming evidence that they don't make a jot of difference to viral infections, he preferred to stick with his beliefs. Now, I'm not saying he

was a bad doctor - far from it - but you and I know that medical science has progressed rather faster than Dr Fanners, don't we Derek?"
"Do you know, you're really starting to annoy me."
"I understand your anger, Derek. You and generations before you have had your faith in a pill for every ill reinforced by Dr Fanners and his idiosyncratic prescribing. But I'm saying, let's challenge those beliefs; let's break free from the drug culture and give your body a chance to heal itself."
"And I'm saying, give me the tablets or else."
"Or else what?"
"Or else I'm not leaving this room."
"Fine, but you'll have to move over - I've got to re-dress Mrs Acheson's ulcer. You can help me if you like."
"I will if you'll give me the tablets."
"Derek, I'd love to. But your cold is caused by a rhinovirus living inside the cells of your respiratory epithelium where antibiotics can't get to it. Prescribing would merely reinforce your doctor-dependence and undermine your autonomy."
"You've got about three seconds left before I punch your lights out."
"Now you're just being childish. I'm trying to educate you, Derek. Antibiotics don't cure colds or flu, and they aren't much use for tonsillitis and ear infections, either. To get penicillin out of me, you'd need to come back with syphilis."
"Will Dr Fanners be coming back?"
"No."
"Pity. He was amazing."
"Yes, well everybody's searching for a hero."
"George Benson, 'The Greatest Love of All'. My favourite song ever."
"Really? Mine too."
"I believe the children are our future."
"Teach them well and let them lead the way."
"Show them all the beauty they possess inside."
"Give them a sense of pride - to make it easier."
"Let the children's laughter remind us how we used to be."
"Do you know, when I'm feeling really low, I take the phone off the hook, pump up the volume and yell: 'I DECIDED LONG AGO, NEVER TO WALK IN ANYONE'S SHADOW!!' "
"IF I FAIL, IF I SUCCEED, AT LEAST I'VE LIVED AS I BELIEVE."
"NO MATTER WHAT THEY TAKE FROM ME, THEY CAN'T TAKE AWAY MY DIGNITY."
"Amen to that."
"Amen."
"Isn't it amazing how a dysfunctional consultation can be turned round by the mutual love of a cheesy soul anthem?"
"Does that mean I get the antibiotics?"
"No."

17/VISUAL ARTS

THE INDEPENDENT
TUESDAY
11 NOVEMBER 1997

Four hundred years of stripping off on doctors' orders



If you think nude is rude, just check out some of the scantily clad models that doctors consulted before 'Gray's Anatomy' imposed a more strictly clinical view. Tom Lubbock uncovers the bare essentials at a new touring exhibition that offers a rare sight of the living dead.

"Last week," Jonathan Swift wrote, "I saw a woman *flay'd*, and you will hardly believe, how much it altered her Person for the worse." Well, how would you put it? We have insides, and we can hardly ignore this important fact, but it's very hard to find the right way of feeling about it. Any attitude you take is likely to seem too sanguine or too hearty, too fastidious or too fascinated, too objective or too sadistic. For that reason, it's a subject very proper for artists to get their teeth into.

"The Quick and the Dead: Artists and Anatomy" may well be the most interesting show to be seen this year. This is a South Bank Touring Exhibition, which has started its run at the Royal College of Art in London, going on to Coventry and Leeds, and it's curated by the RCA's Professor of Drawing, Deanna Petherbridge, with a keen eye for beauty, instruction and astonishment. The theme is interpreted broadly. Every sort of meeting between art and anatomy is represented, from

roughly the Renaissance on. Among the 150-odd exhibits - pictures and models - you find the textbook demonstrations of medicine and biology, figure analyses from the life-class, pictures of dissection-scenes, mythical stories with anatomical subjects (the Flaying of Marsyas, Ezekiel's Valley of bones), constructions of ideal proportions, *memento moris*, and anatomical fantasies which seem to have no obvious purpose. But if this sounds like a heady *mélange*, then what's clear at once is that here categories aren't clear. In this gallery of body-works, observation, inquiry, aesthetics, allegory, comedy, pathos, the grotesque and the erotic are all mixed up.

There are big names, including such well-known art-science crossover artists as Leonardo and Stubbs. You find the old masters at practice. Rubens doing a page of muscles, Caracci doing a page of feet (who says hands are the hardest things?). And the theme turns up some excellent surprises, like Jacques de Gheyn's exquisite pen studies of a frog or a little picture by Nicholas Hilliard of a skeleton on a dark ground with the nervous system flashing round it like lightning. But the journeyman artists, who did the medical body-maps for Vesalius and his heirs, are no less absorbing. And it's with these works, whose use is notionally scientific, that a contemporary viewer is in for the most shocks.

We have an idea of normal anatomical illustration: a more or less neutral display of the body's parts and functions, where the body is shown as an ideal system, in no relation to any particular body alive or dead. It's a working model - dehumanised if you like, but hardly human enough for one to feel that. And what's startling about their 16th- and 17th-century equivalents is how this norm isn't observed, doesn't seem to be a norm at all. What you find, in image after image, is the anatomised body embracingly humanised.

Dissected, disembodied, opened-up, stripped to the muscle or the bone they may be, but these physical specimens remain living, personalised, socialised bodies. They stand in landscapes. They co-operate with the anatomist's work by helpfully displaying their own dissections to the viewer, holding open skin flaps to reveal viscera, fanning out an array of tendons. They catch our eye, and adopt poses that are heroic or modest or sexy

(a man with his genitals sliced and labelled). Skeletons kneel in prayer. Corpses seem to swoon with pleasure or writhe in pain. And this, remember, is textbook stuff.

It's hard to catch the tone. You're not sure whether it's a kind of joke, or whether it's a practical matter of showing how a living body works, so best to show it alive, or whether the story-telling impulse just can't be restrained even here. They're fantastic pictures, but perhaps not simply fantastic if one thinks of devotional images of Christ and the martyrs showing their wounds, and surgery before anaesthetics, and public executions in which the condemned often stayed alive and talking during evisceration, and general worries about the impiety of dissection (though it's good, too, to understand God's handiwork).

The temptation for us, well-schooled in the Surrealist virtues, is to find these pictures *disturbing*, and to like them for that. Wrongly, I think. Not that they're untroubled, but they're broad-minded about this. Depicting bodies from one point of view doesn't exclude, for these artists, all the other ways of feeling about them; and giving the anatomical body consciousness allows one to do this with a certain ease. But this ease doesn't last. And one of the many stories this very rich exhibition tells is about the birth of the "disturbing". It's a matter of different responses getting separated out, so that when they come together, it jolts. It seems to happen around the middle of the 18th century.

Gautier d'Agoty's dissections in colour mezzotint are really the first pictures where you feel something is up, the first occasion you want to talk about aestheticisation. The gorgeous colours and tactile tones are at odds with the detailed body analysis. The artist's response is divided. He's shocked himself by the way his fractured specimens can look so lovely, and relishes it. You have this sense even more strongly with the extraordinary illustrations to an *Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus* by Jan van Riemsdyck - and here I think even those with the most hearty appetite for the disturbing will start to wobble a little.

Pregnancy is an abiding source of interest throughout the show, and clearly it produces intriguing Russian-doll images.

A body is opened up to disclose another little body inside it. The mother stands before us, and the belly peels back like the petals of a flower, or flips off like the lid of a pot. But in these beautifully high-finish red-chalk drawings, Van Riemsdyck incites the most extreme contraries. The mother's body is clearly a specimen for display, just a torso cropped at the chest and thighs. At the same time it's erotic flesh on a bed, the legs splayed for sex as much as birth, with the pudenda stressed by being pointedly hidden by a little book. It's also dead meat on the slab: in another picture the thighs are sawn through and the stumps presented full-frontal. After these sensations, the dull neutrality of Gray's *Anatomy*, established in the mid-19th century, seems a wisely calming measure.

It's around then, with the firm specialisation of scientific illustration as a non-artistic genre, that the show pretty well stops. But not quite. In the last 15 years there's been a lot of anatomy-based art - art that reveals in the body's dangers or tries to assert the body's rights against clinical classifications. A dozen or so examples are included here (by Kiki Smith, Cindy Sherman, Robert Gober, Marc Quinn and others) to put a contemporary gloss on all the history.

But it's rather a token gesture, partly because there's so much of this work that it could make a large show by itself, partly because it then seems arbitrary to exclude almost all the earlier modern art about the body (one Max Ernst collage excepted), but mainly because all the subjects the recent stuff is dealing with are very thoroughly addressed by the rest of the show. It's still absorbing the shocks felt a couple of centuries ago. And although one would hardly wish to return to Vesalian medicine, this exhibition can't but incite some nostalgia for its vision, where bodies whole and dissected, quick and dead, weren't subject to an absolute *apartheid* - just so long as it stays a vision, and doesn't come to live next door. To 24 Nov, RCA, London SW7 (0171-590 4444); then on tour

Naked truth: (left to right) bare muscles from Vesalius's 'Fabrica', 1543; Jan van Riemsdyck's front view of the womb, from 'Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus', 1774; Antonio Cattani's 'Dorsal view of standing musclemans', 1781 Glasgow University / Wellcome Institute

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In America presidents come out for lesbians. In Britain...

A prime-time heroine on US television is openly gay; on Saturday night Bill Clinton met her at a formal gay rights dinner. In Britain, male homosexuals, cabinet ministers and all, enjoy a new era of acceptance. But, says Kathy Marks, lesbians remain largely hidden in professional and public life.

Rhona Cameron, the stand-up comedian, tells audiences that she and her girlfriend get fed up with being stared at when they are out together in public. She fantasises, she says, about marching up to straight couples in restaurants and telling them: "No, we're not interested in a threesome, and no, you can't watch."

Cameron, who co-presents BBC's *Gaytime TV*, is one of a growing breed of comics who delight in subverting lesbian stereotypes. With their talent for self-parody, they go down a storm on the mainstream circuits. They are living proof, should it still be needed, that lesbian women are not the stumpy and humourless creatures of popular caricature.

Gays in Britain have never had it so good. After three decades of campaigning, many of the legal battles have been won and remaining inequalities look set to be tackled by the Labour government. Gay culture has permeated mainstream society and businesses are vying for the pink pound. The love that dared not speak its name can now be shouted from the rooftops, by latter-day Oscar Wildes and their female counterparts.

Or can it? Somewhere in this great social revolution, lesbians have been left behind. When people talk of a relaxed and self-confident gay community, they are usually referring to gay men. When they admire the vibrancy of the culture, they are thinking of male bars and clubs. It is gay men, chiefly, who have



Ellen DeGeneres, left, star of the American sitcom 'Ellen', a come-out lesbian in character and in real life, went to the Clinton dinner with her girlfriend Photograph: AP

thrived as a result of the transformation in attitudes. They bask in the public perception of them as creative, exuberant, glamorous.

Women lag way behind in the image stakes. To a large extent, they continue to be classified either as butch, shaven-headed "diesel dykes", or, alternatively, "lipstick lesbians" - pornographic fantasy figures created for male delectation.

In the eyes of their detractors, lesbians represent an abomination of both femininity and motherhood.

Lesbians. Even the word itself has a harsh ring to it.

Consider the number of success-

ful, high-profile gay men in Britain. Actors, designers, writers and musicians too numerous to list, not to mention three MPs. Well-known lesbians are thin on the ground. A couple of actresses: Sophie Ward and Pam St Clement. The novelist Jeanette Winterson. Maggi Hambling, the painter. And as of recently, one politician, Angela Eagle.

There was a short-lived vogue a few years ago - "lesbian chic" - which gave rise to lesbian storylines in soap operas and revelations of lesbian affairs by female celebrities. It coaxed the subject some way out of the closet, but ended in a froth of media

hype. Genuine declarations such as Angela Eagle's are rare, and still send a prurient frisson through society.

Some suggest that lesbians appear to be inconspicuous because they are outnumbered by gay men in the population. It may be true, too, that they are less politicised and less outspoken. Peter Tatchell, the militant gay rights campaigner, believes that the lack of explicit criminal sanctions against lesbians has, while shielding them from overt persecution, made them less visible.

But the main reason why gay women have a low profile in society is that for them, "coming out" is a

particularly daunting step.

For one thing, research indicates that they acknowledge their sexuality at a later age than men, by which time they may be married and financially dependent. For the estimated 15 per cent who have children, there is the fear, not unjustified, of losing a custody battle. Those who do take the plunge find that there is little infrastructure to cushion them; the support networks and public spaces are all male-dominated.

The workplace, too, is problematic. In conservative environments such as business and the professions, revelations of homosexuality can give

the kiss of death to a career - more so for women than for men. "It's difficult enough to make it as a woman, without being a lesbian to boot," says one hospital consultant. "We already have to deal with sexism; why add homophobia?" One barrister says that if she were known to be gay, she would never be made a QC. "We have to conform to the womanly image as well as the professional one," she says.

In the media and the arts, one expects less intolerance. But even the theatre, home to so many gay men, is said to be unfriendly territory for lesbians. With so few good parts

available for women, actresses dread the repercussions of coming out.

Jackie Clune, the cabaret performer, says: "There's this idea among casting directors that you can't have a known lesbian playing Cleopatra, because the audience won't buy her relationship with Antony. But no one has a problem with Ian McKellen or Simon Callow playing straight roles."

In theory, it should be gay men who encounter more bigotry. They are associated with so many negative things, such as paedophilia and promiscuity, as well as death and disease thanks to Aids. But the prejudice that lesbians face is complex and insidious.

Gay men may be more threatening to heterosexual men, but lesbians - real ones, not actresses in porn films - are more profoundly disturbing because they function wholly independently of men. "A lesbian is a kind of affront to men, a vexing thing," says Beatrix Campbell, the writer and broadcaster.

What seems certain is that lesbians will never escape the strait-jacket of stereotyping until they become as commonplace in public life as gay men. Coming out, though, requires a degree of self-confidence found only in women who have reached an unassailable position in their careers. Martina Navratilova was already unbeatable at tennis; Angela Eagle waited until she was a minister. But few women manage to attain such heights.

Lesbians will never achieve equality with gay men until the glass ceiling is smashed to smithereens.

REVELATIONS

The time: spring 95
The place: Hanover, New Hampshire, US
The man: Bill Bryson, travel writer



Bill Bryson: 'In America there's this feeling you've got to believe it's God's country' Andrew Buurman

'I felt homesick for a country that wasn't my own'

looking out of the window. It was the beginning of summer and the weather was wonderful, but I put my head in my hands and thought: "what have we done?" It turned out that it was harder for me to live in America than for my wife, who is English, and the children. There was nothing to hate, nothing to complain about but I felt homesick for a country that wasn't my own.

The family loved America because it was a big adventure, but for me it was the end of my big adventure. It was a little like moving back in with your parents again in your forties. If I was going to leave Britain, on reflection I wished we'd gone somewhere new, so there was some forward motion rather than what felt like a backward step. America was too familiar for me.

I'd taken Britain for granted and hadn't realised how much I'd enjoyed it. You're in a privileged position as an immigrant. When the Royal Family misbehaves or England fails to qualify for the World Cup, I can sigh: "nothing to do with me." Yet when something goes well you can step forward and join in the celebration. As an American

living in Britain you're not pigeonholed by your accent or your educational background; you can move comfortably through the various social strata. Now it's my wife's turn to benefit from being different. She got off a speeding ticket the other day by being very English: "I'm terribly sorry, I'm new here and not terribly good at seeing these speed signs."

Finally, it dawned on me that I'm a natural outsider: it's a nice position to be in. England is far more tolerant of these dissenting voices; America is a young country needing to establish its identity; there's this feeling that you've got to join in and believe it's God's country.

I realised, eventually, that there was no point rebelling because it was a done deal. So I decided to try to make the best of it and enjoy New England - it's not as if I'm serving some sort of prison sentence. One of the things that charmed me again about America, after having lived away for so long, was the scale. My original motivation for walking the Appalachian Trail, which I write about in my new book, is the immense amount of land that isn't

being used. I was drawn to the idea of immense distances without houses. However, the deeper motivation could have been that hiking made me an outsider again.

Walking is uniquely un-American. People just do not walk, it's quite extraordinary. Where we live is about a five-minute walk from Main Street, Hanover. It's a level, pleasant stroll through leafy streets and I'm virtually the only person in the town who would think of walking there. My neighbours think it's a rather nice idea but feel they don't have the time, and it's true because they spend all their time looking for parking spaces.

On the Appalachian Trail I was repeatedly struck by how empty it was, even though it crosses some of the most arresting and celebrated landscapes in the country. Half the population, 100 million people, live within a day's drive, and yet even on the busiest days there are only a few thousand people, maybe an average of one person a mile. If you walk on any footpath in the Lake District, it's like the long marches of the Chinese Army. Yet on the Appalachian Trail everybody

is bitching that it is getting way too crowded. It's crazy.

You cannot imagine what that is like, to try to cover 2,200 miles on foot. It's like walking from Land's End to John O'Groats, then turning round and returning to Sheffield. In Great Britain you would go through villages, drink in pubs, stop in bakeries. On the Appalachian Trail you're in the wilderness, with all your possessions and food on your back.

I have an ambivalence about the American outdoors. It is compellingly beautiful, with a majestic scale, but at the same time there is also something menacing. You are far enough away from help that if your appendix bursts or you broke a leg you could end up in big trouble. Just a couple of weeks ago, they carted the dead body of a kid off Mount Lincoln (one of the peaks I climbed).

I devoted a whole summer to hiking the Appalachian Trail and I never really made up my mind whether I liked it or not. The landscape is so empty, it is like looking at the ocean - featureless. I often thought it would be nice if there were a couple of castles to make your eye linger.

There is a similar tension between being an outsider and joining society. The one time I felt connected in some fundamental way was in Maine, when I went down to a stream to filter some fresh water and saw a moose there. They're striking creatures, ugly but unthreatening, and you have a real sense of being out in the wilds. Yet I was struck by the surreal thought that this was an American moose, and that we were both Americans. If this moose could have spoken, he would have talked with an American accent, too. But even in America they are exotic creatures, and suddenly there was a recognition that we were both outsiders.

'A Walk in the Woods' by Bill Bryson is published on 13 November by Doubleday and costs £16.99.

Interview by Andrew G Marshall

Casual observers



Dressed to impress: mini Blairs in poppies and sweatshirts PA

If the Prime Minister's children are on show on Remembrance Sunday, they should dress the part, says Diana Appleby.

We are all, on the whole, far more relaxed about the way we bring our children up, and this is reflected in the way that they dress. I for one loathe to see girls in frilly dresses and gold necklaces, and little boys in bow ties and waistcoats. I'm all for legging and polo shirts, and fun, comfy clothes. But just occasionally we need our children to look smart. Out goes the sweatshirt and the tracksuit bottoms - in comes the jacket and tie or neat skirt.

Surely the Cenotaph Remembrance Service on Sunday was such an occasion. But apparently not so for the Blairs. They were quite happy to let Euan, 13, Nicholas, 11, and Kathryn, 9, appear on the balcony of the Foreign Office, in full view of the crowds and veterans below, dressed in T-shirts and sweatshirts. They were, admittedly, wearing poppies, but this served only to highlight the casual nature of their clothes even more.

Their father was of course part of the event - and he was dressed entirely appropriately. Even their mother had made the effort with a sombre black number - but the kids looked as if they'd rushed along after a quick game of football in the back garden. Slumped on the balcony, stifling the odd yawn, they looked as if they would have been much happier watching Cartoon Network. They were certainly dressed for that.

I have two girls, aged four and

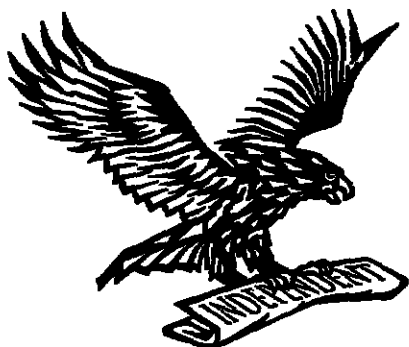
nine, and I know what hell it can be to make them look smart and presentable. Children's clothes now are perfect for casual wear - stretchy, brightly coloured leggings, pull-on jumpers, polo shirts, fleecy jackets and Kicker boots. They look great - and they are convenient for parents because they wash easily. But wave anything like a smart skirt or buttoned blouse at my two and they run a mile. Amidst much grumbling they will wear such clothes for school - but out of school hours, I have to physically pin them down to force them into granny-pleasing outfits.

But I think that is good for their souls. They have to realise that occasionally we have to dress to please other people, not just wear what we feel comfortable in. Children also have to realise that certain clothes are appropriate for certain occasions, and dressing up in a smart jacket and tie shows respect. T-shirts don't.

Both the Blair boys attend the Oratory School, in west London, where they have to wear a uniform of black blazer, striped tie, and grey slacks, so a little formality wouldn't have been unfamiliar at all. It would have cost nothing for Cherie to suggest that they put on their blazers. She wouldn't even have had to insist on a collar and tie - a long-sleeved polo shirt in a dark colour would have been just about passed muster. The point is that the young Blairs didn't have to be at the service on Sunday, but the way they were allowed to dress was as if she was saying, "OK, I know they all look a bit of a mess, but kids will be kids, won't they? Does it matter what they wear?"

Well, I think it is the answer is yes. They are the Prime Minister's children, after all.

It may not be easy, but we must break the Saddam cycle



EDITOR: ANDREW MARR
DEPUTY EDITOR: COLIN HUGHES
ADDRESS: 1 CANADA SQUARE,
CANARY WHARF,
LONDON E14 5DL
TELEPHONE: 0171 293 2000
OR 0171 345 2000
FAX: 0171 293 2435
OR 0171 345 2435

Here (barring an improbable change in established behaviour patterns) we go again. Once again Saddam Hussein is defying the United Nations. Once again the Security Council is meeting to decide what should be done. Once again retired generals and sundry other war-gamers throng to TV studios to hold forth about the West's military options. Once again Saddam is talking to his own people about sacrifice and national honour. The odds are that, once again, bombs and Cruise missiles will be unleashed. Pentagon spokesmen will then doubtless proclaim the exercise a total success. Saddam will have "learnt his lesson" and Mr Clinton's approval rating will go up a few points. Sanctions will be reinforced, to the deprivation and distress of ordinary Iraqis, but not of their leader or his henchmen. For a few months, a couple of years if we are lucky, Saddam will stay in his cage. And then, without doubt, the whole cycle will repeat itself.

Surely, reason implores, there must be a better way.

Alas, reason and the unending mess in Iraq are not natural bedfellows. After driving him headlong from Kuwait in 1991, the Western allies quite reasonably expected that Saddam would be overthrown – if not by popular uprising, then at least by a section of his humiliated regime. But it didn't happen. Six years, much CIA plotting and a virtual three-way partition of his country later, it still hasn't happened. In the meantime, what reasonable leader could wish to inflict extra misery on his own suffering people, rather than comply with the UN inspectors, secure the lifting of sanctions, and rebuild his country's prosperity? But Saddam remains in power, to all appearances domestically more secure than at any time since the Gulf war. On present form he will outlast Bill Clinton – maybe even Tony Blair – just as he outlasted George Bush, Margaret Thatcher and John Major before them.

And there is a method in his madness. Increasingly it is us, not Saddam Hussein, who are boxed in. If it does not punish Sad-

dam, the 1991 Gulf coalition will lose face and the dictator has won both prestige and additional elbow room. But each successive missile strike seems less an act of international peace-keeping than vengeful spite. What is more, Saddam is an inextricable piece of the wider Middle East puzzle. Thanks to the intransigence of the Israeli government and the reluctance of Washington to do much about it, defiance of the US is a powerful card for Arab public opinion, for Saddam as well as Hamas suicide bombers, however vile their methods. Small wonder the Americans this time are palpably uneasy about acting alone. If push comes to shove, Britain, propelled by the Blair-Clinton friendship and the dictates of an "ethical foreign policy", will doubtless go along. France, China and Russia, for understandable reasons, may not.

If so, then they are wrong. The Gulf war showed the doctrine of collective security and Mr Bush's "new world order" working at their best. For Saddam to flout the United Nations now and get away with

it would show them at their worst. A stake would be driven through the heart of UN credibility. Saddam Hussein remains a blight on his region; not quite an Adolf Hitler, perhaps, but an utterly ruthless leader who has invaded a neighbour, used chemical and biological weapons against both foreign armies and his own people, and would almost certainly do so again, given the opportunity.

If necessary, therefore, the West must use force. But if the cycle of ever-diminishing returns is to be broken, it has to do more. First, a forgetful world needs to be reminded of what it is up against: let the UN lay out detailed evidence of the secret weapons programmes. But, it will be objected, the limited force used thus far has manifestly not stopped these programmes, still less brought about Saddam's downfall: should not the allies do what they did not after the 1991 land war and "go all the way to Baghdad"? But George Bush's objections then are doubly valid today. Now, as then, no obvious alternative to Saddam exists.

Now, as then, the American-led invaders would either have to take over the government of Iraq, as an occupying foreign power in the Arab heartlands, or countenance the disintegration of Iraq and even greater regional instability than today.

The second line of attack must be diplomatic, against the legitimacy of his regime. With his every challenge to the UN, and the fevered response to it within the world community, Saddam reminds us that he is Iraq's recognised leader. But why should this be? Why not link his compliance with UN resolutions to his continuing membership of that body? Meanwhile his record of lawlessness and brutality at least equals that of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic in Bosnia – why not treat him as an indictable war criminal, and ostracise every emanation of his regime?

This finally might encourage the putsch against him for which the West has waited in vain so long. It is not much of a solution, and it will take time. But it is the best available.

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number. Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

LETTERS

Woodward jury

Sir: We believe that many of the criticisms levelled at the American Woodward jury apply equally in Britain. Two years ago we put our faith in the "12 good men and true", opting for a Crown Court trial for our son. We witnessed how a jury, despite medical and character evidence, can reach bizarre decisions. Prior to this experience, we had inherent faith in the system: indeed we had never had cause to question it. Our first rumblings of disquiet came when, during the case, a barrister stated to us that "we all know prisons are full of innocent people".

The jury must be one of the final institutions where there is no quality assurance, no way of ensuring standards, no means of evaluation and from whose decisions there are few means of redress. Members are not only unaccountable, but also likely to be unrepresentative, and the dynamics of decision-making are likely to be uninformed and questionable.

In the light of the Woodward case, and of the crisis of confidence in the British justice system caused by recent high-profile miscarriages of justice, isn't it about time that the Government included this issue on its agenda, and gave consideration to ways in which jury decision-making processes can be monitored and evaluated. In the long term replacing juries with a bench of nine lay magistrates, who are at least familiar with the requirements of the court, might be a better option.

VALERIE HEWITT
MARTIN HEWITT
Bursledon, Hampshire

Remembrance

Sir: I do not wear a poppy. In due course, no one will wear poppies.

At the age of 41, I have many reasons to remember the Second World War and those who died. My father, aged 74, was closely involved in the war and draws an invalidity pension as a result. My grandparents were killed by a V-2 rocket and my uncle in an RAF flying accident just after the war.

I do not wear a poppy because, whatever the impact on my life, it was not part of my life. Yes, these people died to make

my life easier and I fully acknowledge that, but I cannot turn back and remember a time that I did not know.

At some point, we will stop marking the two world wars in the way we now do, for the simple reason that those with living memory of them will themselves have died. We no longer mark the battles of Waterloo, Hastings or Trafalgar in this personal way. So, too, this shall pass.

My father fought one tyrant and his generation won. My generation must turn to fight the new tyrants.

SIMON C ALLEN
Little Gaddesden,
Hertfordshire

Sir: In Ypres last summer, we walked silently along the old trench lines, and visited countless home-made museums in garages and sitting-rooms, stacked with the debris of war. Old tin hats, rusting ammunition,

shoes that still held the shape of their owner. Our children stood underneath the great arches of the Menin Gate, tearfully reading the lists of the dead out loud.

My grandfather and his brothers left their native Galway to fight in the Great War – Ypres, Passchendaele, and Salonica. They saw the worst of the action, but managed to survive the four years. They returned home relatively intact, but not unscathed. The nightmares continued into old age.

My grandfather wrote his memoirs in later years, saddened that the incredible bravery he had seen in his fellow Irishmen had never been fully acknowledged ("Irish tribute to troops who fell in Great War", 10 November).

At the end of our day at Ypres we visited the cathedral, completely rebuilt, as was the entire city after the war. In the garden the children noticed a

tall Celtic cross. The inscription, in Irish, told that the cross had been dedicated by the people of Cork to all the Irish who had fallen at Ypres. In some foreign field there is a little piece that is for ever Ireland.

GERALDINE BURKE
Marsh Baldon, Oxfordshire

Tests on animals

Sir: The Government's decision to ban testing of finished cosmetics on animals (report, 6 November) may be seen as a victory, but the size of the victory is scant for such an important issue. While working as a laboratory animal technician, it has not been unusual for me to see the death of as many animals in a day as have been saved annually by this move.

One of the main reasons for cosmetics testing gaining such public contempt is the uselessness of the results. For example, the infamous eye irritancy

test recently illustrated on *The Independent's* front page was rendered pointless by the fact that the rabbit cornea is significantly thinner than ours, by the inability to cry in rabbits and the subjective assessment of damage.

Using animals in medical research could be compared in a similar way. The vast and various differences between animals and us make it a wholly unreliable method of research. Such methods can be used to prove that smoking cigarettes is safe, as is eating arsenic, while lemons and tap water are poisons capable of killing us.

Such issues need to be confronted and discussed at the highest level. The need for a Royal commission has not been alleviated by the banning of cosmetics tests, but emphasised.

C M MILES-WRIGHT C1AT
Farnborough,
Hampshire

Torture victims

Sir: The suggestion by HM Inspectorate of Prisons to convert HMP Aldington to an "immigration detainee holding centre" (report, 6 November) is ill-conceived.

The Home Office repeatedly says that it retains only a small percentage of asylum seekers and only in exceptional circumstances. Why then build another detention centre for them? These people have committed no crime in the UK, yet they can be locked up for indefinite periods. Some of them have suffered torture. The further detention of torture survivors who have already suffered so greatly is, from any moral standpoint, inadmissible.

This widely trailed notion of a new detention centre – as well as the Home Secretary's abrupt announcement to Parliament last week to restrict to five days the time that most asylum seek-

ers will have to present legal and medical evidence of persecution – smacks of opportunism in the wake of the Roma (Gypsy) hysteria at Dover.

SHERMAN CARROLL
Director of Public Affairs
Medical Foundation for the
Care of Victims of Torture
London NW5

Biggest freeze

Sir: You state ("Antarctica: the final holiday frontier", 5 November) that a temperature of -102°F (-74.4°C) was recorded at the South Pole in September 1957, making it officially the coldest spot on earth.

The coldest temperature recorded was at the Russian Antarctic research station Vostok. It was -128.6°F (-89.2°C), in July 1983.

Whatever the record, it's uncomfortably cold.

NORMAN D PRICE
Ewhurst, Surrey

Hard and soft news

Sir: All will be fine with touchy-feely news media, says Suzanne Moore (article, 7 November). As she says, "Consumer stories, human interest stories, quirky stories, do attract audiences. The big stories lately, whether Diana or Louise Woodward, are undoubtedly human interest stories and no less important for that."

The US administration's flinch from a hard decision on climate change is now last week's news, while the Paula Jones sexual harassment case seems set to run and run. One will certainly be followed more avidly by more people than the other – but is that any guide to importance?

One can picture a similar line in the 1930s: "Never mind that middle-aged, middle-class male stuff about boring old German politics and Hitler – let's have some more about Edward and Mrs Simpson's romance!" Which would be just the way to ensure that millions of people eventually suffer in ignorance.

C A BANKS
London SE6

Heights of absurdity

Sir: I was intrigued to see the photograph which accompanied Peter Popham's article "Bandit King" (8 November) captioned "India's southern highlands". The pace of change in India is now so widely acknowledged that it is no longer considered newsworthy. The emergence of a snow-capped mountain range (with a mahayana Buddhist structure in the foreground) in south India suggests, however, change of such seismic proportions that it will no doubt be reported upon in greater detail. I await Mr Popham's next article.

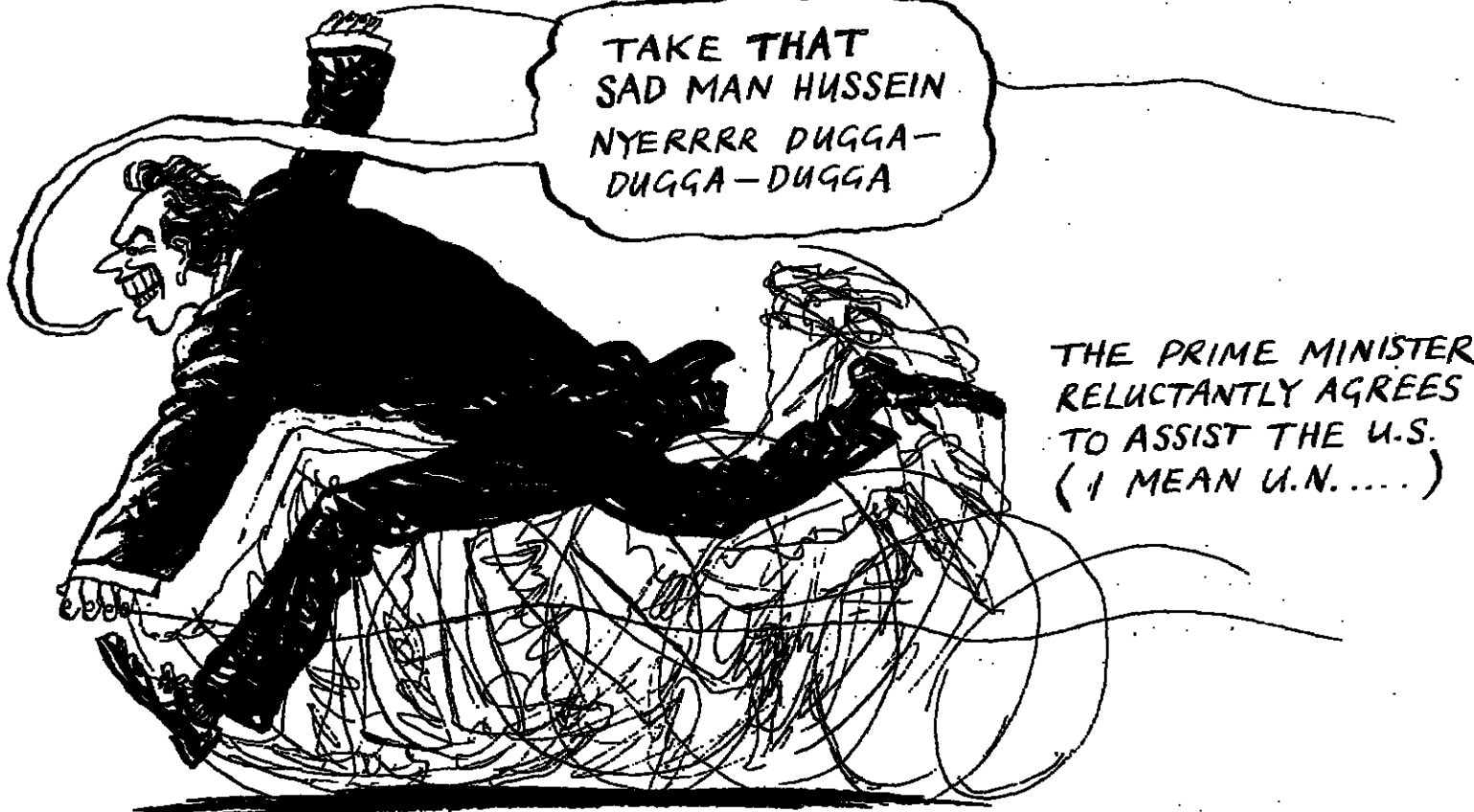
T C A RAGHAVAN
Press Counsellor
High Commission of India
London WC2

Scandal in church

Sir: I can remember reading, in the letters of Sidney Smith, a canon of St Paul's Cathedral from 1831, that the public's misuse of the cathedral had become a problem (article, 5 November). He complained of graffiti on the tombs and of couples having "assignations in the pews". What's new?

PATRICIA V DAWSON
London SE26

TOP-GUN-BOAT DIPLOMACY



PRIESTLEY

By the pricking of my thumbs, a Shakespearean shrink this way comes



MILES KINGTON

A new book called *The Genius of Shakespeare* claims that as a psychologist Shakespeare was way ahead of Freud and knew far more about the human heart than he did.

But however good a psychologist he was, what kind of psychiatrist would he have made? It's all very well writing great dramatic masterpieces which explore the human condition, but sorting out a patient with a real-life problem is a slightly different kettle of fish, as this scenario shows ...

SHAKESPEARE (opening door):
Come in, come in and make yourself at home.
Your coat can go up there, and here your hat.
And you can lie down on the

couch just here.
That's good. Now, sir, you have an appointed time?

MACBETH:
Aye, that I do, at eleven of the clock.

The hour at which you fixed to sort me out.
SHAKESPEARE:
And you are punctuality itself. Sit down, good sir, and tell me, please, thy name.

MACBETH:
My name? It is Macbeth.

SHAKESPEARE:
Just that? No other names?

MACBETH:
No, no. That is my name, for better or for worse.

SHAKESPEARE:
A family name, perchance? Or is it one
That comes familiarly first?

Surname or forename? Are you Mr Macbeth?
Or is Macbeth your Christian, given name?

MACBETH:
None of these. My name is King Macbeth.

SHAKESPEARE:
How very nice for you! And king of where?

MACBETH:
The King of Scotland, won by force of arms.

As the three witches did foretell to me.

SHAKESPEARE:
Ah ha! So you see witches, do you? Well, well, well!

And tell me, King Macbeth, what do they say?

MACBETH:
That I shall be the king.

SHAKESPEARE:

And so you are! What splendid witches you have got and no mistake! They seem to know a lot, these witches that you see.

So, was the throne inherited?

MACBETH:
No, 'a'en by force From Duncan, King before me, who was slain.

SHAKESPEARE:
By you?

MACBETH:
Yes, yes, by me. Well not by me. My wife.

My wife it was who struck the fatal blow.

And streaked the sentries' faces with his blood.

No, come to think, it could not be my wife.

As she was quite reminded of her father's face

While bent upon the murder of King Duncan.

And could not strike the fatal blow, so I

Was forced to do it while she hid her face ...

SHAKESPEARE:
Quite so. Do you see witches still these days?

MACBETH:
When they have something solemn to impart.

SHAKESPEARE:
Alone? Or do you have a witness of these meetings?

MACBETH:
Yes, yes – brave Banquo saw them too with me!

SHAKESPEARE:
And he would bear this out, would he?

MACBETH:
Alas, he's dead. I brought

about his death. For much I feared that he would take my throne.

SHAKESPEARE:
I see ... well to sum up. You are convinced

That you are King of Scotland, on the throne.

You have a wife who murders everyone.

Who stands between yourself and high-born power.

From time to time you meet three lady witches

Who tell you what will happen next to you.

The only witness, sadly, you have slain.

Is that about the length and breadth of it?

MACBETH:
Oh, sir, how well you sum these matters up!

So, what think you? Can I be fully cured?

SHAKESPEARE:
No doubt of it. Come back another time

And we shall talk about your Mum and Dad.

Exit Macbeth. Shakespeare rubs his hands.

This man is barking mad, and yet his tale

Will make a five act drama. I'll not fail

To dramatise his dream life for the stage.

My play *Macbeth* will soon be all the rage!

A pot falls off the table and breaks.

Ah ha! *Macbeth* brings bad luck when 'tis said.

I think I'll say "the Scottish play" instead ...

A new formula: let the state pay for politics



**DONALD
MACINTYRE**
FUNDING OF
POLITICAL PARTIES

Tony Blair's utterly unexpected decision last night to hand back the donation given to his party by Bernie Ecclestone, President of Formula One Holdings, has far-reaching implications for future political funding in Britain. This will matter, in the long run, much more than the messy government decision to exempt Formula One from the ban on tobacco advertising. As far as the latter is concerned, Mr Ecclestone's donation was always more important than the public health minister Tessa Jowell's past marital links with the motor racing industry. Ms Jowell didn't take the decision, Mr Blair did. It was on Downing Street orders that health officials travelled to Europe to seek a blanket exemption for motor racing from the EU ban; and as a fallback, if that failed, for a 10-year phased introduction to allow the industry to seek alternative sponsorship.

The real point of last night's announcement is that it raises huge long-term questions of over how sustainable private sector funding of parties will now be. Labour, to its credit, has travelled light years from the previous government's obsessive secrecy over party funding. Given, however, that the Prime Minister backed the Formula One exemption — rightly or wrongly — for reasons unconnected with the donation, but still handed the money back, he has thrown serious doubt over future donations by those businesses that are bound to be affected by government decisions. In particular he has propelled state funding back to the top of the political agenda.

We now know that Mr Ecclestone gave money to the party in the normal way, and that the issue of Labour's pre-election blind trust turns out not to be relevant. It is anyway at present dormant and empty, having served its purpose of funding Blair's office when he was in opposition. That doesn't alter the fact that the blind trust was a bad idea. Ostensibly, the trust provided a clean and convenient method of funding the leader's office. The argument was that had the leader known who funded his office he might have fallen foul of the Nolan regime when called upon in the Commons to tackle issues of direct interest to the donors. No doubt Blair was indeed kept in ignorance of the donors. Nevertheless the notion that walls were so Chinese that no one else in the Labour Party other than the trustees themselves could ever entertain a suspicion about who might have made large donations is absurd: as absurd as the fiction which prevailed in the Conservative Party that the party treasurer kept all the secrets and that ministers never knew a thing about party donors. In nine cases out of 10, businessmen want it known to at least someone who counts that they were donors.

The one undeniable consequences of the blind trust method of funding was to keep the names of the donors from the rest of us. We now know Mr Ecclestone wasn't a blind

trust donor; but if he had been, we might never have known. It isn't even slightly impugning any Opposition leader's integrity, then or now, to say that it would be much better if henceforth his or her office was paid for either out of general party funds — or possibly, through an increase in Short money, by the state. Sir Patrick Neill has already made it clear that he regards blind trusts as a highly suitable target for investigation. I'm sorry, but most businessmen don't give money for the sheer altruistic joy of anonymously helping a cause they believe in.

Which is precisely why, on the larger issue, Labour was correct and far-sighted in deciding to publish the details of all donations over £5,000. It seems almost inconceivable that Sir Patrick will not, at the very least, impose a similar requirement on all parties. This would, once and for all, end the Tory party's historic secrecy on the issue. But it also bites on Labour itself because the party now receives more money from business than it has ever done before.

But if there is a single lesson from the Ecclestone affair it is that annual publication more than certainly isn't enough. First, rather than allow the parties to dribble out the list in the midst of much bigger news generated by their annual conferences, Sir Patrick should oblige all the main parties to make much more of a public issue of their funding by publishing the lists, perhaps on the same designated day, ensuring proper scrutiny and comparison. Second, he will have to examine whether the amounts, as well as the names of the donors, should be published.

Third, Sir Patrick, who on the basis of his first public showing looks admirably open-minded and robust, should also consider some means of investigating a selection of government decisions each year in which party donors may have an interest. Let's say, for example, that the Government clearly decides to reverse John Gummer's previous policy of refusing planning permission for out-of-town shopping centres, and that Sainsbury's, with the strongest of commercial interests in promoting such a change of policy, continues to be an important Labour Party donor. Is there any reason why there shouldn't be an independent examination of the factors and reasoning behind the decision? After all, if, as ministers will certainly continue to maintain, they are quite blind to such influences, then such an examination will simply serve to back them up. The National Audit Office already has the right to call for papers on decisions in which it is interested. There is no reason why Sir Patrick's committee should not have the same rights in undertaking similar spot inquiries.

All these reforms might serve to make private sector funding of political parties more acceptable. But the case for public funding may prove much stronger. Personally, the Prime Minister has always been extremely wary of state funding, which is why he quietly dropped it as a firm party policy in favour of referring the whole funding issue to Sir Patrick's committee. This was partly, perhaps, because he wanted to recreate Labour as a party with a lot of business funding, on the model of the Victorian Liberals; but more because he was understandably reluctant, at a time when politicians were held in low esteem, to try the patience of electors further by making them pay for political parties. But the Government is already considering a limit on election expenditure, which would contain the costs to the taxpayer. State funding is acceptable in much of Europe. There will be a considerable debate within the Government before it submits its evidence to Sir Patrick. But state funding is suddenly looking more likely than it did before last night's announcement.

Want to save the opera? Here's a solution from the gods



**ANDREAS
WHITTAM
SMITH**
SOLVES THE
VENUE PUZZLE

The important aspects of the crisis in the London opera houses are like ill-fitting pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. In frustration, Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, knocked the board over last week and asked Sir Richard Eyre to find the solution — he is to conduct a radical reassessment.

As with the game, it doesn't matter which particular fact you scrutinise first. Let us start with the Royal Opera House itself, the building rather than the opera company. It is being reconstructed at a cost of £210m, of which lottery money covers £78m. The balance is to be supplied by rich, private donors. It can be safely assumed that they won't put up the money if the building is turned into a receiving house for both the Royal Opera (with the Royal Ballet) and the English National Opera, currently operating out of the Coliseum.

This is because the implicit bargain with the donors — by subscribing you become the respected members of an exclusive, cultural club — would be broken. They would no longer feel that they were part of the opera company itself. Mr Smith appears to have come to realise this by indicating over the weekend that perhaps the English National Opera could go to the new Sadler's Wells theatre, so that the Royal Opera could continue on its own.

Another way of breaking the bargain — without which the building work will never be finished — would be to put the Royal Opera into liquidation. As a result, any donors, such as Lord Sainsbury and Vivian Duffield, who have topped up their funding with loans, would find that they would never recover what they have lent rather than given. Such treatment would likewise discourage further private funding. Whether the Royal Opera fails as a going concern will be decided tomorrow when Lord Chadlington, the chairman, presents his new plans to the Arts Council. The temptation to force the company into liquidation should be resisted.

It is because the management has been so spectacular-



Opera-goers leaving Covent Garden: London's leading opera house can be saved for rich and poor alike

ly incompetent that a widespread desire to punish the board with bankruptcy exists. But the awkward fact to examine, exemplified in the person of Sir Jeremy Isaacs, who had a lengthy stint as general director until earlier this year, is that managerial ineptness has been combined with artistic excellence. By common consent, the recent work of the company has been as good as any done in the past 30 years and well up in the world league.

Sir Richard needs to propose, therefore, a new management structure for the companies that secures strong commercial ability as well as artistic flair and which does away with cronyism in the boardroom. In turn this means that so long as the companies are in receipt of public funds, appointments should require approval by the Arts Council or a government minister.

Let us next turn to the piece in the jigsaw puzzle marked "ballet" and at the same time pick up a second awkward shape — the Coliseum building. There is no logical reason why the Royal Ballet should be yoked with an opera company. Such pairing is relatively rare around the world. I suspect the Royal Ballet has always been treated as the junior partner and suffered as a result. As for the Coliseum, for some time the English National Opera has wanted to leave because the building has poor facilities backstage and is very dilapidated.

There is a lot to be said, therefore, for the Secretary of State's suggestion that the Coliseum should become a dance

house, providing a home for an independent Royal Ballet, the English National Ballet and visiting companies. In the new circumstances, the Royal Ballet could apply to the National Lottery for funds to renovate the Coliseum. In turn the English National Opera would move into the new Sadler's Wells theatre, where it could retain its integrity as an independent company, with its own supporters and traditions.

As a result of these moves, rather than the present situation, in which two opera companies and a ballet company operate from two theatres, the three companies would each have a permanent venue. In particular, following the departure of the Royal Ballet, the Royal Opera would have extra nights at its disposal each week. Would such extra capacity help bring these expensive arts to ordinary people at affordable prices? There are two parts of this problem — the cost of seats and touring outside London.

High prices are mainly a feature of the Royal Opera; the Royal Ballet is cheaper and so is the English National Opera. A bold solution would be ruthlessly to employ the mechanism of the marketplace. The Royal Opera, on one of the evenings each week formally used by the Royal Ballet, could charge seat prices equivalent to what might be paid at the theatre or even at the cinema. It would revert to its much more expensive "normal" tariff during the rest of the week. Rich and poor opera fans alike would attempt to book for the "cheap" night, which would be quickly sold out.

Of the many disappointed customers, the rich, together with corporations who take guests to the opera as a form of high-class entertainment, would then apply for expensive seats during the rest of the week; while those of modest means would wait to try again for the next cheap night a week later. Perhaps there would have to be a ballot.

This is probably as far as Sir Richard could go in completing the jigsaw puzzle. The Secretary of State will have to do the rest and start with the question of touring. It is colossally expensive for the national opera and ballet companies to go round the country with their huge orchestras and elaborate sets. Nor would international stars necessarily sing or dance outside London. Mr Smith should accept this and try instead to strengthen our excellent regional opera companies.

There remains the most difficult problem of all — government subsidy at its present reduced level and box office receipts do not together provide sufficient funds to enable high quality performance to be achieved consistently. This is why Mr Smith has indicated

that the Royal Opera House may have to be privatised — in other words stop getting any state help at all, so that additional subsidy could be made available to the other national companies.

Examples are given, such as the summer seasons of opera at Glyndebourne, which are financed entirely from ticket sales and private donations, or the Metropolitan Opera in New York, which achieves higher standards, bigger audiences and lower prices than the Royal Opera House, all with minute public subsidy.

But Glyndebourne does not employ international stars and it changes its limited repertoire cautiously. And in the United States all the arts benefit from the fact that donors earn tax relief on their gifts. The Met itself has the extra strength that the rich in New York, compared with London, are more numerous and even more wealthy. It would thus be an enormous gamble to reduce gradually to zero the £15m annual subsidy that the Royal Opera House currently receives and rely upon private finance to make up the difference and more. But this is how the jigsaw puzzle can be completed.

If a beard was good enough for Jesus, why not New Labour?



**NICHOLAS
SCHOON**
DEFENDS
FACIAL HAIR

As a weirdly bearded 22 years standing, I've never felt the need to write a word about this condition — until *Today*. It was a mini-debate on BBC Radio 4's flagship news programme yesterday morning that brought a red mist down in front of my eyes.

Here's the background. Over the past year, there has been a trickle of tongue-in-cheek newspaper stories and diary items about Labour's style counsellors putting pressure on hairy-faced frontbenchers, and now ministers, to shave. Then Chief Secretary to the Treasury Alistair Darling went and did the deed, totally erasing his already close-cropped pepper-and-salt effort. (Three beards remain in Cabinet, however, and there are several others among the ranks of more junior ministers).

Cue further press coverage, followed by the decision by *Today* to devote airtime to the issue. Bearded backbencher Paddy Tipping gave a splendid, heart-warming defence of facial hair, and I was moved by his talk of it bringing him comfort and confidence. Then the egregiously smooth Peter York gave a chillingly credible account of

how corporate image-makers — and now, it is alleged, political ones — have set their faces against the beard. Research had shown that Joe and Joana Public think beard-wearers "strange, divergent, unreliable". They are "individualists, not team players". They are not wanted "front of house".

But what really made me bristle was when Sue MacGregor, audio-icon of common sense and sweet reason, interjected: "And you can't see people's mouths." How could she say that? Of course you can see their mouths, unless they are sporting a ridiculously unkempt and overgrown beard of the kind that gives all us bearded a bad name.

I've never experienced any direct anti-beard prejudice myself — or at least, I've never been able to detect it. But I have become aware that it's out there, ugly, unkind, invincible, like any other unjustified prejudice. You read or hear the odd item which makes you realise some people, quite a lot of people, not only lump all of us bearded together but go on to hold something against us.

Case 1. A Peak District National Park committee is

appointing a new warden. The only applicant without a beard gets the job, and one of the councillors on the committee actually tells him afterwards that that is why he succeeded. Case 2. I ring MORI to ask if it knows of any polling research that reveals people's distrust of or uneasiness with the bearded. The researcher I speak to says she will try to find out, but adds that she would not be surprised if such was the case.

Weird, isn't it. How can we be considered collectively, when we are all individuals. And how can anyone form a view about, say, our reliability based on something as superficial as facial fur. It provides me with the tiniest hint of what it might be like to be black or gay, always useful for a white middle-class liberal. And it gives me an excuse for all those job interviews I've failed over the years. Just blame it on bosses whose minds were as small as their chins were smooth.

My father is a long-term bearded and I began growing my own the day I left school. Back then it was about the only thing we had in common, but

the beard was the beginning of a crucial and complete reconciliation. It was a struggling, straggly affair at first; but as the hair on top of my head began its retreat, it thickened up and became excitingly piebald. I've removed it only a couple of times over the years, been horrified by my appearance and immediately regrown it. The occasional trim and a shave around the periphery once a week is all the maintenance required.

Why have a beard? Give me one good reason why not. It seems highly likely that the reason men can grow them is that they served some purpose during our evolution. I've not heard a completely convincing explanation for what this purpose might actually have been, and I accept that beards may have no real function in advanced industrial societies. But they don't seem to do any harm. So why waste time and energy, every day, scraping very sharp steel across your face (or getting a whirling little machine to do it for you)? It's not natural.

The most monstrous allegation of all is that beards are inherently unhygienic, trap-

ping extraneous matter and providing a refuge for other life forms, as described in Roald Dahl's *The Twits*. But if that is the case, then the hair on your head is unhygienic too. We get round that problem not by shaving our scalps but by washing our hair regularly, something we beardedies are perfectly capable of applying to our chins. True, you don't push food through an orifice in the middle of your pate. But let me assure you that it really is quite easy to keep dinner out of your beard — you simply apply good table manners, and keep your moustache trimmed so that it does not become a soup strainer.

There have been times when facial hair has been far more popular than today (I hear it is pretty fashionable in parts of Afghanistan). I am confident that beards will come into mass fashion again. That said, I have no wish to be some kind of beard Messiah (but I note that Jesus, God and the prophets are all strangers to the razor). And I hold nothing, absolutely nothing, against people with hairless chins — as long as they keep their daft prejudices out of my face.

Bulgaria in Crisis

BBC launches Appeal

LEFT TO FREEZE
Jordan, 1½, already malnourished could die from cold and hunger this winter unless aid reaches him now. With temperatures plummeting to -15°C Jordan's scant clothing and no shoes offer him little protection from the bitter cold and there is no money to heat his orphanage. There are 37,000 places in Bulgaria's orphanages.



No Money To Feed The Children No Money To Heat The Orphanages

Bulgaria is a country in the midst of a serious economic crisis. Unless urgent help is sent, thousands of children will suffer terribly this winter.

There is little money to heat the orphanages. Orphanage Directors are having to beg for food from local villages and rarely know where the next meal is coming from. In some areas children, like Jordan, are going hungry and the cold could prove fatal for many children this winter. Without aid this could be catastrophic for Bulgaria's orphanage children.

The European Children's Trust, sister charity of The Romanian Orphanage Trust, is ready to distribute emergency food packs, clothes and fuel to the orphanages in most need. **Your gift today will save lives and bring hope.**

● £28 could buy enough emergency food packs to feed 20 orphanage children for a week or heat an orphanage for 3 days.

Please send whatever you can to help children survive the winter or call 01273 299399 NOW

I enclose £_____ to save Bulgarian orphanage children. Cheques to The European Children's Trust, FREEPOST KE8359, 64c Quorn Street, LONDON, EC4A 4AR or call 01273 299399 NOW. Registered Charity No 1048737

Card no _____ Expiry date _____
Signature _____ Date _____
Mr/Mrs/Ms/Ms _____
Address _____
Postcode _____

Telephone no. _____
Return to: Tanya Barron, (IDM), Bulgarian Emergency Appeal, The European Children's Trust, FREEPOST KE8359, 64c Quorn Street, LONDON, EC4A 4AR or call 01273 299399 NOW. Registered Charity No 1048737

The European Children's Trust

Please act NOW - winter is coming

Brown spells out plans to shadow the single currency

British business will be operating a shadow currency to the euro when EMU starts in 1999. Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, yesterday spelled out the extent to which the euro will become the common currency of business as the debate raged over monetary union. Michael Harrison reports from the Confederation of British Industry annual conference in Birmingham.

Mr Brown yesterday announced a sweeping package of measures designed to prepare businesses for monetary union in 1999 including allowing them to convert shares to euros and pay taxes in the new currency.

The moves will be seen by Euro-sceptics as further evidence of how Britain will shadow the single currency to the point of de facto adoption, while remaining outside the first wave of member states.

The measures are the clearest indication yet of the Blair administration's belief in the merits of EMU and its determination to ensure British business is not disadvantaged, even though the pound will not enter until 2002 at the earliest. The DTI is to consult business on the possibility of amending the Companies Act to make it easier for British firms to issue shares in euros and convert existing shares to euros. Companies will also be able to file accounts in euros and set up bank accounts in the currency.

Adair Turner, director general of the CBI, said that adoption of the euro by business would have "a pervasive effect on public opinion". Provided it was a success then it would push opinion in favour of a single currency.

The Government also plans to give selected banks a "stamp of approval" enabling customers to select ones that permit accounts to be operated in euros without punitive charges. Other legislative steps are also being examined, said Mr Brown, to make the euro easier for firms to use. The measures, he added, formed part of the Government's "prepare and then decide" strategy on EMU.

"In less than 14 months from now a German business selling products to France or the Netherlands will be able to do so without exchange rate risk, with lower transaction costs and with more transparent prices, something that in itself will pose a big chal-

lenge to a British competitor hoping to supply the same order," the Chancellor said.

That was why it so vital to begin preparations now for the single currency. These preparations, he added, were "too important to leave to dogma or internal party politics and too important to leave aside for years more of indecision and drift."

The advisory group of business leaders, trade unions and consumer groups set up to advise the Government on EMU preparations will report to Mr Brown in December and he will publish its findings in the New Year. There will then follow a series of conferences throughout the country to make businesses aware of the practical steps that need to be taken.

Meanwhile, the Treasury yesterday sent out information packs to Britain's top 1,000 firms detailing business preparations for the euro. "We have moved from talking about preparations to making them in practice," the Chancellor told his audience.

Separately, Wim Duisenberg, the Dutch president of the European Monetary Institute and one of the frontrunners to chair the European Central Bank, indicated that Britain would not necessarily have to rejoin the Exchange Rate Mechanism as a precursor to entering the single currency. He said there were other ways of demonstrating stability and said it remained essential that UK economic policies were aimed at further convergence.

William Hague, the Tory leader, entered the conference prepared for a "bare-knuckle fight" with the CBI over his party's opposition to the single currency and walked out with the loudest and longest ovation of all. On a day when economic and monetary union totally dominated debate, everyone from the Spice Girls to Ted Heath got a mention as the arguments over Europe swung one way and then another.

Employing some of the most uncompromising language heard at a CBI conference since Sir Terence Beckett's famous challenge to Mrs Thatcher in 1980, Mr Hague painted an image of financial and social ruin if Britain were to enter EMU.

A single currency, he warned, could mean employees having to accept cuts in wages for the first time since the Great Depression as vicious unemployment blackspots sprang up across the continent. His party, he said, had paid the political price for Britain's humiliating exit from the Exchange Rate Mechanism on Black Wednesday and had apologised to the millions of people who had lost their jobs, their homes and their businesses. "I have apologised for



Following the euro: The Chancellor's measures will be seen by Euro-sceptics as de facto UK adoption of EMU outside the first wave of member states. Photograph: Brian Harris

the ERM. I never want to apologise again for following the dictates of fashion."

Mr Hague went on to dismiss the arguments of the pro-European lobby that Britain could not afford to be out of a single currency if the rest of Europe went ahead. "The danger for Britain is not that we will somehow be left behind in Europe. The real danger for us is that Europe could be left behind in the rest of the world."

The Tory leader conjured up an image of the straitjacket of a single currency binding Britain into a world of uncompetitive, inflexible, bureaucratic labour markets, out-priced and outperformed by the rest of the world and incapable of adjusting interest rates to accommodate domestic economic conditions.

"Unlike the ERM the single currency

is for all time. British business could find itself trapped in a burning building with no exits. British business needs a hard-headed assessment of the risks involved in a single currency before we consider joining it. And that assessment is only just beginning," he said.

Mr Hague said that EMU supporters pointed to the US as an example of a successful single currency but this ignored the fact that there was a high degree of labour mobility in America while the Government could automatically transfer billions of dollars from prosperous to poor states through federal taxation and expenditure. By contrast Britain had "a long way to go before we can say to people: get on your hovercraft and look for work."

Outlook, page 23

BLAIR GAINS QUALIFIED CBI APPROVAL

Britain's business leaders yesterday passed judgement on Tony Blair and declared themselves satisfied with Labour's performance since it swept to power. In his opening address to the CBI conference, Sir Colin Marshall, president, said: "We are now in the seventh month of the Labour administration and our considered opinion, both individually as business people and collectively as the CBI must be: so far, so good."

Sir Colin said the business community had been pleased and surprised at the genuine partnership that was developing

with Government. But he denied that the CBI was supporting one political party and lashed out at critics led by Sir Stanley Kalms, Dixon's chairman, who claim it is no longer representative of the broad sweep of businesses. Sir Colin said the CBI had welcomed the Government's decision to give independence to the Bank of England in setting interest rates and its commitment to a business-friendly enterprise economy. But he highlighted areas where business was unhappy such as the national minimum wage.

— Michael Harrison

Run on Hong Kong bank fuels global market jitters

The week started badly for Asia's financial markets, with Hong Kong's three main banks forced to respond to a run on deposits.

Although the contagion did not rage across the globe yesterday, investors in London and New York have become more fearful about catching 'Asian flu'. Diane Coyle in London and Stephen Vines in Hong Kong take the temperature of the global markets.

Hong Kong yesterday saw the first sign of public panic over the financial crisis when depositors besieged the International Bank of Asia (IBA) to withdraw money following rumours that it was in difficulty. The territory's three main banks, the Hongkong Bank, the Bank of China and Standard Chartered Bank, responded with a highly unusual joint statement condemning "unfounded market rumours circulating about the health of certain smaller banks".

The statement acknowledged that Asia's currency and equity turmoil was having an effect on Hong Kong but insisted its economic fundamentals were strong. "Hong Kong's banking system is robust," it said.

Yet investors across the globe have grown more concerned about the turmoil in Asian financial markets. Shares in London and New York made small gains yesterday, in edgy trading ahead of a holiday today in many markets and the Federal Reserve's key interest rate meeting tomorrow. The FTSE 100 index ended 43 points higher at 4,806.8. But analysts have grown more concerned about the continuing crisis.

Stephen Hannah, head of research for Japanese bank IBI in London, said: "There is a vicious circle. The South-east Asian crisis continues to broaden and deepen."

Concern about the Japanese economy, exposed to south-east Asia through bank lending as well as trade, has increased correspondingly. Gerard Lyons at DKB said that although the big Japanese banks were responding vigorously to their problems, the economy was in difficulty.

The Fed is not expected to raise US interest rates this week because of the fragility of the world's financial markets. But Alison Cottrell at Paine Webber said this meant fears about inflation pressures on both sides of the Atlantic would increasingly trouble investors.

"People have been talking about the Goldilocks economy — neither too hot nor too cold — with inflation tame so far. Now we are being reminded that Goldilocks is just a fairy story," she said.

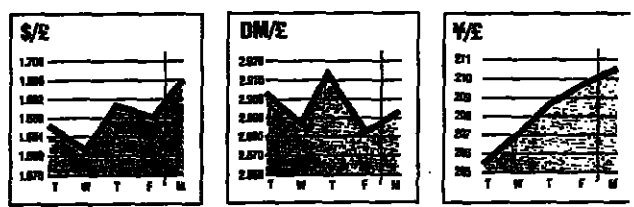
UK figures yesterday showed that inflation pressures in manufacturing are negligible. Prices charged at the factory gate rose 0.1 per cent last month, edging the annual rate down to 1.2 per cent. Manufacturers' input costs fell by 0.2 per cent during the month.

But the Bank of England's Inflation Report tomorrow is expected to warn there are still risks of higher inflation, pointing to the price pressures in the other four-fifths of the economy.

A survey from the British Retail Consortium yesterday underlined this concern, showing high street spending rebounded last month to the levels seen in the early summer, following a sharp dip in September.

In the circumstances yesterday's fall in the Hang Seng index could be regarded as modest. It fell 111.66, or just over 1 per cent. But it closed at 9,999.84, passing the psychological prop of the 10,000 mark.

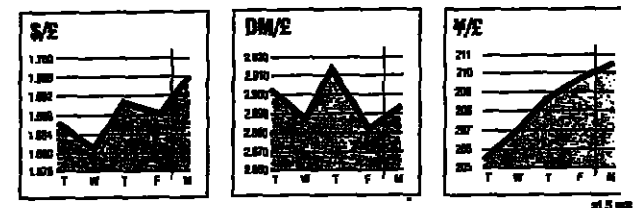
STOCK MARKETS



Four Jones index and graph in \$m

Indices	Close	Change	Change%	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield%
FTSE 100	4806.80	42.50	0.89	5367.30	3882.70	3.53
FTSE 250	4640.80	2.30	0.05	4983.80	4321.80	3.48
FTSE 350	2327.50	16.70	0.72	2570.50	1935.70	3.60
FTSE All Share	2880.91	15.45	0.53	2907.68	1925.79	3.58
FTSE SmallCap	2810.6	2.70	0.12	2407.40	2127.50	3.26
FTSE Hedging	1284.3	-0.70	-0.05	1348.50	1198.70	3.38
FTSE AIM	982.8	-0.40	-0.04	1138.00	965.90	1.02
Dow Jones	7591.36	11.75	0.16	8250.00	6150.15	1.77
Nikkei	15687.20	-128.15	-0.82	21450.57	15722.48	0.58
Hang Seng	9999.84	-111.66	-1.11	16250.31	8775.88	4.00
Dax	3762.53	52.64	1.42	4450.89	2703.96	2.13

INTEREST RATES

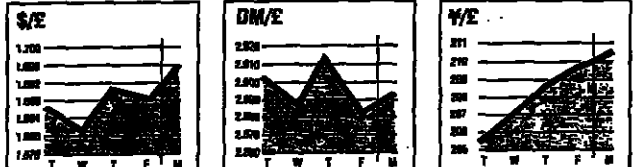


Money Market Rates	3 month	1 yr	1 yr 1/2	2 yr	3 yr	5 yr	10 yr	Long bond	1 yr swap
UK	7.62	1.24	7.80	0.93	6.58	-1.08	6.47	-1.43	-
US	5.78	0.25	6.00	0.91	5.92	-1.35	6.17	-1.57	-
Japan	0.52	0.58	0.58	0.14	1.82	-0.92	3.30	-0.88	-
Germany	3.72	0.53	4.13	0.81	5.61	-0.31	6.21	-0.58	-

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Falls
Danka Bus Sys	227.50 -22.00 -7.35
Calm Energy	452.00 -23.50 -5.19
Man Gp	223.00 -11.50 -5.14
Courtaulds	281.00 -15.00 -5.33
Ionics Gp	170.00 -3.20 -1.88
BAA	517.50 -3.00 -0.58
Rugby Group	126.00 -3.50 -2.70
BICC	160 -4 -2.44

CURRENCIES



Pound	Dollar	Swiss	Yen	Mark	Yuan	Index
Dollar	1.6962 +0.55c	1.8509	0.5898	-0.20p	0.8057	-
D-Mark	2.8943 +0.34p	2.4878	1.7083	-0.32p	1.4957	-
Yen	210.44 +0.06	163.61	124.07	-0.01	111.07	-
£ Index	102.70	-0.20	90.80	104.90	+0.10	96.20

OTHER INDICATORS

£/US\$	£/DM	£/¥	£/S\$	£/A\$	£/HK\$	£/NZ\$
18.96	-0.18	22.03	114.00	3.80	108.7	-
311.05	0.50	382.65	159.30	3.6	158.76	-
4.87	-0.08	4.83	Base Rates	7.25	6.00	-

source: Bloomberg

Rolls owners keen to join BMW bid

The head of BMW disclosed yesterday that he had been approached by a dozen wealthy Rolls-Royce owners keen to join the German group if it bids to buy the luxury car maker from Vickers. Michael Harrison examines the latest manoeuvrings.

Berni Pischetsrieder, chairman of the German car maker, said it would make sense to bring Rolls and Bentley into its stable of models alongside Rover. He said that if BMW did succeed in taking control of Rolls then the cars would continue to be built in Britain and

the marque would retain its separate identity.

BMW, he added, had been approached by a number of Rolls owners asking to be associated with any bid it might make. Mr Pischetsrieder ruled out bidding for Rolls' parent company, Vickers, other interests of which include Challenger tanks, the Cosworth engineering business and propulsion systems.

He also refuted reports that it was supporting Mayflower, the automotive engineering group which is expected to launch a £1bn bid for Vickers in the next few days. "We have nothing to do with their bid. I have not had any discussions with them at all," he said at the CBI conference in Birmingham.

"I have no interest in Vickers as a company. We are partners in terms of contracts."

BMW has close links with Rolls since it is supplying the new 12-cylinder engine that will power its next generation of luxury cars. But Mr Pischetsrieder said he was not interested in the Formula One engine manufacturer, Cosworth. Its engine had broken down in 28 out of 32 Grand Prix and in any case BMW was developing its own Formula One engine.

Apart from BMW and Mayflower at least four other car makers are thought to be contemplating bids for Rolls, which some analysts believe could fetch up to £600m. These are Daimler Benz, which has retained the US bank J.P. Mor-

gan to provide advice, Ford and Chrysler of the US and Fiat of Italy, which owns Ferrari.

Although BMW has retained HSBC Investment Bank to advise it, Mr Pischetsrieder said the bidding process for Rolls had not yet started in earnest. He also indicated that BMW may yet not bid because of its other commitments.

The heavily debt-financed Mayflower bid could come as early as today, although some City observers expect it to wait until later in the week. Mayflower will take on about £650m in borrowings to fund the takeover attempt. Vickers' chairman, Sir Colin Chandler, yesterday issued a Stock Exchange statement urging Mayflower to clarify its intentions.

Funds find buying opportunities

Undaunted by the recent volatility in stock markets around the world, British fund managers are using the corrections on both sides of the Atlantic to build up their exposure to UK and US equities. Tom Stevenson, financial editor, reports on this and other findings from the latest Merrill Lynch Gallup survey of investors' intentions.

£1,100bn, are unfazed by the recent gyrations in world markets. They still believe UK shares are not overvalued by comparison with both other equity markets and bonds; although the poll was taken before last week's interest rate rise.

British investors were just as enthusiastic about US equities. Despite having been net sellers of American shares for most of the past two years, during which the Dow Jones index has soared, UK funds have been buying the US market for two months now.

According to Trevor Greetham, global strategist at Merrill Lynch, institutions are being driven into UK shares by historically high cash weightings and by the perception that falling base rates will boost gilts, in turn underpinning equity prices.

He said the average British investing institution had 6 per cent of its portfolio in cash, around twice the level at the beginning of 1994. Managers planning to put money into the markets outnumbered those planning to raise cash by 18 per cent.

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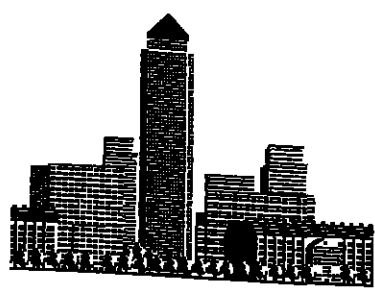
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OUTLOOK ON WHY BT LOOKS LIKE A BID TARGET ITSELF AND THE HIGH STREET BANKS' FAILURE TO SERVE THEIR CUSTOMERS

A sad day for Britain's international ambitions

A lucky escape for BT or a profound setback for Britain's global ambitions? The answer depends very much on where you are coming from. In the short to medium term at least, this looks like a near perfect solution for BT's shareholders - a thoroughly satisfactory outcome to the great MCI adventure. BT emerges with a clean break, a cash exit, a big profit on its original investment, a handy \$465m breakup fee and with a balance sheet overflowing with possibilities for share buybacks and special dividends.

Having been forced yet again to abandon its US ambitions, BT now looks to be a chronically overcapitalised company. BT executives are keen to stress that the pursuit of an aggressive international strategy - which presumably means acquisitions - remains a priority, but even so, there is going to be a lot left over and shareholders can happily contemplate very considerable capital repayments.

Better still from a City perspective, the affair may have turned BT from hunter into hunted. This is the second big setback for BT in the US in five years. Its first attempt to expand there through the acquisition of the mobile phones company, McCaw, was thwarted by a combination of regulators and AT&T. This second setback looks uncannily like a question of the US conspiring one way or another, consciously or unconsciously, to keep the foreigner out as a major league player in its domestic telecommunications market. If telecommunications is becoming a bid or be bid for business, BT may just have found itself relegated to the second category.

BT has made itself naked in more senses than one. During the course of the regulatory exchanges over MCI, the British government was persuaded to abandon its special share in BT, which if it remains as overcapitalised as it presently is, becomes a potentially attractive target. With the special, protective share now gone, there's nothing to stop the likes of AT&T bidding.

While this would still seem a rather unlikely end game, it is none the less possible to see a bid premium developing in the BT share price. More good news for shareholders, then. From a short-term shareholder value perspective, it is usually better to be the object of someone else's strategy than to have one yourself. What of the longer-term outlook though? BT still has plenty to go for in Europe and the Far East, but deprived of a significant position in the world's largest telecoms market, it may now find itself back there in the second league of telcos. That's the big danger and that is also why BT must strive for a worthwhile working relationship with MCI's new master, WorldCom.

There was always something a little bit intangible about the rationale for the MCI takeover. It was partly about the importance of size in the rapidly changing global market place for telecommunications, partly about the marrying of MCI's entrepreneurial culture with that of BT's more defensive, public telco culture and the opportunity value that might create in deregulating European markets. And it was partly about tapping into the fast growing international market for smart, business telecommunications. Unfortun-

nately, it could always be argued that the two rival suitors for MCI, WorldCom and GTE, were more compatible and logical partners. It's a shame none the less. For a time there, it looked as if Britain was in with a real chance getting itself up there with the world leaders. That chance may now have gone for good.

Banking on merger plans

Was there a takeover approach by Barclays to Legal and General? David Prosser, chief executive of L&G, was quoted in the week-end press as saying he didn't believe in mergers and that any approach would be rebuffed. His remark was a general one, intended to convey the company's determination to remain independent. So he was somewhat surprised to see it linked with the name of Barclays. He hadn't intended it that way. As is often the case in the press, he seems to have been taken out of context. So did it happen? Did Barclays approach him? Probably not, seems to be the answer, though it is easy to see why the stock market might think it true. The idea is eminently plausible.

Having decided to throw in the towel on investment banking, Barclays is under pressure to come up with an alternative strategy for taking the company forward. The idea of using the bank's established channels of distribution to sell other financial services, such as insurance, endowments and pensions, is hardly a novel one. Bancassurance has been around for

many years now. But it is only relatively recently that corporate financiers have started to think in terms of the creating giant retail financial services conglomerates out of the merger of high street banks with life and insurance companies.

National Westminster Bank got quite a long way down the aisle with the Prudential before deciding to call it off, and a few years ago, Halifax bought Clerical Medical. It is therefore entirely possible that Barclays is thinking in the same terms - a takeover of L&G, or possibly Norwich Union, with which it already has links. Would such a union make sense? A case can certainly be made for it. There would be little scope for cost cutting, unlike any consolidating merger within these separate industries, but there are obvious advantages to be had from funneling the insurance company's products through the bank's customer base.

Moreover, as the borders between traditional forms of retail lending, account holding and other forms of saving become more and more blurred, there is obviously something to be said for the one-stop shop, the company that can offer all these services.

But do high street banks need to merge with insurance companies to create that opportunity? Royal Bank of Scotland has developed a highly successful relationship with Scottish Widows which delivers benefit to both companies, probably on a par with anything that could be derived from a full scale merger, but without having to go through that process.

It is no accident that Royal Bank of Scotland is considerably more innovative

in the banking market than most of its English peers, despite its comparatively small size. It was one of the first to introduce telephone banking and now has more of its customer base using this service than any other bank. It was also the first to introduce a fully fledged Internet bank and has forged some very promising banking links with Tesco's and Virgin Direct.

In part, Royal Bank is able to do this because it is comparatively small, with just 2 per cent of the UK banking market. For larger banks to go wholeheartedly into these new forms of low-cost banking would mean cannibalising their existing markets on a scale that would do irreparable damage to margins and profits. For Royal it is not the same. For every one customer it cannibalises from its existing customer base, it gains 50 others from rival banks.

The big clearers are highly vulnerable to these new forms of banking and are naturally, given the constraints of their existing cost bases and market shares, worried sick by them. It is against this backdrop that the pressure for mergers, both within the banking and insurance sectors and between these sectors, ought to be seen. All these plans are essentially protective and defensive in nature. If these companies were serving their customers properly with state of the art low-cost banking and insurance products, grand strategies like these, dreamt up in the City for the benefit of the City, wouldn't even be getting on to the chief executive's desk, let alone be coming close to execution. The fact that they are serves only the underline the failings of these ancient behemoths.

BT agrees to sell MCI stake for \$7.5bn after WorldCom raises offer

BT yesterday agreed to sell its interests in MCI, the US telecoms giant, for \$7.5bn after upstart WorldCom raised its offer for MCI to a knock-out \$37bn. However the agreed offer, the largest takeover bid ever, leaves BT with a hole to fill in its aim to become a global telecoms player. Sameena Ahmad reports.

in stocks and cash, topping a competing \$28bn bid made by GTE, the US telecoms giant.

The new company, to be called MCIWorldCom, will have combined sales of more than \$30bn a year. Under the terms of the MCI and WorldCom deal, BT receives \$7bn or \$51 a share in cash for its 20 per cent stake in MCI, plus a \$465m breakup fee negotiated as part of BT's original merger agreement with MCI.

The deal represents a pre-tax gain of \$2.25bn on BT's original investment in MCI. Sir Peter Bonfield, BT's chief executive said: "I think you could say that we have used our rights pretty well." He said the joint venture with MCI on Concert, the telecoms services company 75 per cent owned by BT, would continue.

BT has negotiated a non-exclusive contract between WorldCom and Concert for five years. BT has a call option on MCI's stake in Concert.

Sir Peter said: "MCI has been valuable to us. We've made a lot of money out of it. We weren't prepared to get into a bidding battle at these levels. WorldCom is convinced that it can get the synergies and so can pay this sort of very high premium." BT's shares closed 11p firmer at 465p, but had risen to 475p at one stage yesterday.

Sir Iain Vallance, BT's chairman, answered criticisms that its failure to buy MCI itself left it with the need to find a US partner to pursue a global strategy: "We have been unable to talk to other companies under the agreement with MCI. However a lot of companies

have come to us and now we are released from the restrictions we can talk back. It wouldn't be too far out of the question to say we are thinking of US partners."

Sir Iain said BT had heard from "all the usual suspects". Asked about particular potential joint ventures, he said: "The whole of the communications industry is in turmoil. There are big changes. Yes, we have obviously been in discussions with GTE and we remain good friends with GTE."

"We couldn't reach agreement with Cable & Wireless, but we parted as good friends." Asked about what BT would do with the \$7.5bn raised, Sir Iain said: "It is too early to say." However he added: "We would not rule out share buybacks or special dividends."

CWC exceeds expectations as pre-tax profits double

Cable & Wireless Communications, the giant UK telecoms and TV Group formed by a four-way merger last year, announced its maiden annual figures yesterday at the top end of forecasts. It said its reorganisation was ahead of schedule and that more than 1 million homes were taking its services. John Wilcock reports.

Cable & Wireless Communications (CWC), Britain's biggest cable telephone and TV group, announced that its pre-tax pre-exceptional profit more than doubled to £65m in the six months to September, and would comfortably meet its cost-cutting target of £100m a year. Analysts had been expecting profits between £50m-£65m, excluding a £200m exceptional charge for redundancies and write-downs. The company's shares rose 5p to 233p.

Graham Wallace, CWC's chief executive, said: "Despite the demands of the reorgani-

sation following the merger, we have increased revenue, profits and the number of customers, while introducing new products and improving customer service."

CWC was formed when Cable & Wireless, its majority owner, merged its Mercury subsidiary with the UK cable operations of North American groups Nynex CableComms, Bell Cablemedia and Videotron.

CWC's revenues in October had continued to grow at the same rate as they did in the first six months of the year, Mr Wallace said. First-half revenues

rose 12 per cent to £1.1 bn, compared to pro-forma figures for last year. Meanwhile, the number of homes subscribing to CWC's phone and TV services grew by 40 per cent to more than 1 million in the past 12 months. Mr Wallace said he expected about 100,000 of those households to upgrade to digital television services in the first year after their launch.

CWC and BSkyB agreed last week to coordinate the launch next spring of their digital services, which promise more channels and better video and audio quality.

Labour's guru gives warning on jobs market inequality

One of New Labour's most influential gurus is in London to spread the message that flexibility in the jobs market is not enough. Robert Reich, the former US Labor Secretary, tells Diane Coyle that governments also have to spend money and expand the economy to combat inequality and exclusion.

There are few people who manage to win respect for their intellectual abilities, political engagement and sheer likeability. Robert Reich, Secretary of Labor in the first Clinton administration is one of these rare creatures. Perhaps it is not so surprising, then, that he did not last all that long in the bear-pit of Washington and has returned to the academic world as a professor of economics.

Even so, his analysis of the world of work, set out in his 1991 book *The Work of Nations*, has had a lasting influence on economic policy in the US and now in New Labour Britain. Professor Reich is not entirely content about this, however. In the US at least, he reckons, his policy message has been watered down, with the Administration basking in the sheer success of the American economy in the past few years.

Speaking to *The Independent* yesterday, he said: "When the current expansion ends and the tide goes out again, the underlying structural problems will be revealed. We should be us-

ing this time of prosperity to tackle them."

The Reich analysis starts with the observation that demand for labour in developed economies has shifted hugely in favour of people with a high level of skills and education, leaving a surplus of those with too little education or those who happen to live in the places where there are no new jobs. The result is that inequality has widened and living standards for many have fallen behind.

"The Anglo-Saxon model is working exceedingly well for creating jobs," he says. "It is a far less successful story in terms of wages, insecurity and inequality."

Some parts of his prescription for tackling the insecurity and unfairness have become familiar and even uncontroversial. For example, he puts heavy emphasis on the importance of education and of reskilling the workforce, and on what have come to be known as "active" labour market policies, common-sense measures like having the employment service make sure the unemployed know when a job that might suit them is available.

Other parts of Professor Reich's solution are also New Labour orthodoxy. He emphasises that jobs must pay enough to ensure that anybody who is working is not living in poverty. This means introducing a minimum wage and top-up tax relief or benefit payments to boost the income of those on low pay. Britain should be in this position within a couple of years.

But his policy recommendations in their entirety are more



Robert Reich, President Clinton's former Labor Secretary, wants the flexibility of capitalism without the cruelties

radical than politicians either side of the Atlantic are prepared to accept in full. As he admits: "I'm not sure the argument has been won."

As Europe prepares for the Jobs Summit in Luxembourg next week, "The question is how do you gain the flexibility of American capitalism without the cruelties," says Professor Reich.

The answer he gives says there are three keys. One is flexibility of in the jobs market and markets for products, to allow business to operate efficiently and generate jobs. A second is agility or employability of the workforce, requiring much better education and also additional infrastructure - for example, adequate public transport to get people to where the jobs are. A third is expansionary fiscal and monetary policy.

Number one is gospel in

political circles. Number two is widely accepted but not if it costs a lot of money. Number three is probably the most controversial. "It is far from clear that our economies are growing too fast," Professor Reich says. "Perhaps central bankers ought to wait until there are real signs of accelerating inflation."

He emphasises that he is not a believer in the so-called "new paradigm", the ultra-optimism about the US economy's potential growth as a result of advances in technology and productivity. But he insists that financial orthodoxy must not be allowed to prevent governments making the necessary investments in education and the structure of the economy.

It sounds suspiciously Old Labour. However, Professor Reich has nothing but enthusiasm for the new Government's policies. "The country seems almost reawakened," he says.

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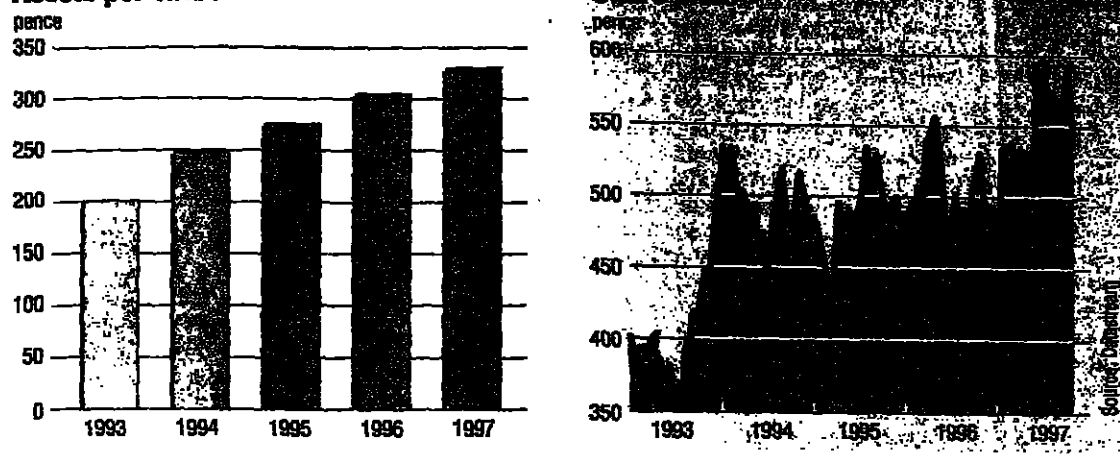
BAA: At a glance

Market value: £5.42bn, share price 517.5p

Trading record

	1995	1996	1997	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£m)	1.16	1.25	1.37	0.74	0.84	
Pre-tax profits (£m)	366					
Earnings per share (p)	27.2	30.4	28.4	22.2	13.2	
Dividends per share (p)	10.1					

Assets per share



Increase in traffic lifts BAA

Half-year figures from BAA, the airports operator, were hit by a welter of one-off distortions that made the interim profits look a lot worse than they really were. Stripping out the impact of the windfall tax, and ignoring decisions to rephase airport charges from the first to second half years and to stop capitalising interest on the Heathrow Rail link, pre-tax profits would have been almost 10 per cent better.

Reported profits of £310m were actually only 2 per cent higher, lower than analysts' forecasts, and the reason for yesterday's 16p fall in BAA's share price to 518p. Declared earnings per share of 13.2p were well down on last year's 21.5p, but once again stripping out the unusual elements implied a much healthier 12 per cent rise, underpinning the 9 per cent dividend increase to 4.9p.

The underlying picture at BAA continues to be sound. The company is driven by traffic numbers, which remain on a relentless upward track. Passenger numbers at Heathrow increased by 4.5 per cent in the half year while at Gatwick, increasingly a hub of equal importance, numbers rose by 12 per cent.

Traffic is expected to grow by 7 per cent for the year, although the full benefit of that growth will be restricted by a strict new regulatory regime which limits traffic charge increases to RPI - 3 per cent. In effect that income must remain static while other costs, such as the price of staff which increased by 12 per cent in the period, push higher.

The other profits driver is the amount BAA can persuade its captive shopping audience to spend in its retail outlets. Underlying income from that source grew by 8.3 per cent during the

period, with the growth coming from outside the duty and tax-free sectors where the strength of sterling limited the increase. In order to keep pushing this higher, and benefiting from tax-free sales after they are phased out in Europe, BAA recently acquired Duty Free International for £423m. Although the deal increased the risk profile of what is to all intents and purposes a utility-type stock, Sir John Egan, chief executive, believes it will be earnings enhancing within three years.

BAA has suffered on two fronts recently, combining the disadvantages of being a pretty dull, low-growth company with the added disincentive of an uncertain regulatory environment. It is little wonder that the shares have done little over the past four years.

On the basis of full-year forecasts of around £480m and £520m for next year, the shares trade on a prospective p/e ratio of 14. They have fallen a long way since the summer, but compared with single-digit growth over the next couple of years, that is about fair.

Sidlaw puts the pain behind it

The metamorphosis of Sidlaw, the newly refocused packaging group, is now complete. And not before time, the company's long-suffering investors might say - as high as 352p in 1994, the shares have been in decline ever since, losing around two-thirds of their value.

Sidlaw, which started life as a Scottish jute company, disposed of its textile divisions in the early 1990s before trying its hand at being a mini-conglomerate. After a string of disastrous figures, the company finally abandoned its oil services interests, ousted

chief executive Digby Morrow and lashed itself to the mast of the packaging industry.

So was all the pain worth it? Well, the first indicators certainly aren't bad. Sidlaw's figures for the year to September, released yesterday, showed a 221 per cent increase in operating profit for the core packaging business. This jump in profitability came not from increased prices - the packaging sector is highly competitive - but rather from efficiency gains. Just under half the growth in operating profit from £1.4m to £4.5m was attributable to cost-cutting.

But generating growth from a tiny base, though laudable, is relatively simple. Now that most of the "fat-trimming" is done, the real challenge facing Sidlaw is to build volume and margins and maintain the improvement.

There are a number of reasons why Sidlaw looks well-placed to build on recent successes. First, product positioning. After years of trying to be a Jack-of-all-trades, the company has decided to build on its established position in the high end of flexible packaging. Its client list, which includes Mars, KP and Procter & Gamble, is impressive. It hopes to build on these blue-chip client relationships in the coming year.

Second, commitment to investment in both staff and equipment. Sidlaw has embarked on an extensive capital expenditure programme and also ploughs around £2m a year into product development.

Finally, the balance sheet is healthy. It has minimal gearing and is sitting on around £8m earned from its recent oil disposals. So the company can afford its investment efforts, and looks well placed to make a strategic acquisition or two.

Yesterday's figures, which saw earnings per share rise from 1.6p to 6.1p, held no surprises for the City, and the shares closed up 0.5p at 112p. Charterhouse

Tilney's forecast of pre-tax profits of £6.1m this year puts the shares on a forward p/e of around 13. Given the strong growth prospects, this looks good value.

Filofax keeps up the fight

Hangover Filofax, a household name in paper-based personal organisers, has been the lingering suspicion that it must eventually be overwhelmed by the electronic age.

Who needs a tatty, paper-stuffed folder when you could have a sleek machine like a Pison, which does everything except make the tea? That fear, coupled with a profits warning in July last year, has taken the group's share price from a 275p high last year. However yesterday's decent half-year results, which nudged Filofax's shares up 2p to 125p, show people are still hooked on paper.

Part of the reason is price. An electronic palm-top can cost upwards of £200 - the new Pison Series 5 costs nearer £500. A Filofax organiser costs £40 on average. Yes, the inserts are expensive, but bought in drabs and drabs, customers at least feel they are spending less. With all the whizzy features, customers see palm-tops as an alternative to personal computers, not paper organisers. Flexibility is another attraction. Taking notes, slotting in receipts and business cards - all this is paper-based.

Though the enduring nature of paper is comforting, Filofax faces growing competition from luxury goods brands like Dunhill and Chanel. However Filofax has agreements to supply groups like Mont Blanc with the stuff for their folders.

Competing for this business makes sense. Filofax makes margins of around 80 per cent on inserts compared with some 50 per cent on covers. Filofax is rightly focusing on higher-value products, where it can grow margin. New "acid-house" colours, smaller organisers and new textures helped push up profits in the half year to September by 31 per cent to £2.7m in constant currency on sales just 3 per cent ahead to £21.5m.

With over 70 per cent of Filofax's organisers sold outside the UK, the strong pound wiped £0.5m off headline profits and £1.3m from sales. However, markets like Scandinavia and Germany are growing underlying sales in high double digits, despite a flat showing from the US, the group's biggest market, as customers delayed buying until later in the year.

So growth should pick up in the second half, with new markets like India and Latin America driving future sales. Filofax still needs to tidy up its non-organiser businesses - around 30 per cent of sales - particularly the ailing greeting cards business.

On around £6.3m full-year profits, Filofax's shares are trading on a low 8 times forward earnings. However, until the results are known of crucial Christmas sales, investors should just hold.

BTR buyout company aims to float within three years

UniPoly, the company formed to buy out a clutch of polymer products businesses from BTR for £515m, is planning to float in the UK in the next three years. For BTR, the sale yesterday kick-started a radical disposal programme. Sameena Ahmad reports.

The management buyout, organised at break-neck speed, was led by a group of BTR executives including Laurie Cant, chief executive of its polymers business, and Legal & General General Ventures, with finance provided by Fuji Bank.

The sale of 33 businesses, including one which makes water beds for cows, operates in 15 countries and employs 5,500 people, is the first step in BTR's plan to reshape itself from an unwieldy conglomerate to focus on engineering.

In September the company said it planned to dispose of

businesses worth almost £3bn in sales, by the end of 1998. The remaining BTR businesses to be sold include its packaging materials division, which reported sales of £1.4bn last year.

Ian Strachan, BTR's chief executive, said: "This is an excellent start to our disposal programme. We have received a good price for a set of businesses that were only growing at 2 per cent a year and which we see little opportunity to develop."

He added: "The cash proceeds will be used to drive forward growth in our core global engineering businesses and a significant proportion will be returned to shareholders in due course."

Though the disposals had been well flagged, the news lifted BTR's share price a further 1.25p to close at 201.75p. Shares in the company have underperformed the market by a third in the last five years.

UniPoly's Mr Cant joined BTR in 1983 after the company took over Thomas Tilling, a company then three times BTR's size. He said he had only

started negotiating with Ian Strachan, BTR's chief, in late August when rumours of the disposal plans were starting to circulate: "The speed in which this deal was completed is unprecedented. The number of companies and countries involved are huge."

Mr Cant said that the aim was to float UniPoly in the next three to five years. "These businesses are all profitable and growing fast. We plan to continue that growth and our aim is a public listing."

The businesses sold operate in the UK, Continental Europe and Australia and have net assets of £180m, generating operating profits of £65m on £471m of sales last year.

The buyout is being paid for by £175m of equity funded by UniPoly's management, which controls 18 per cent, and Legal & General Ventures. In addition the funding included £50m of mezzanine financing and £395 of senior debt from Fuji. Joining Mr Cant at UniPoly will be Ken Chave, finance director, also from BTR, and Ted Minick, a US lawyer, also on the executive board.

Ransomes agrees to £83m offer

Ransomes yesterday agreed to be taken over by Tectron of the US for £83.2m, worth 60p a share. James Hardyman, chairman of Tectron, said Ransomes provided his company with complementary products and strong European and US-based manufacturing and marketing capabilities for its golf and turf-care businesses.

"The combined group will contribute to Tectron's growth objectives by leveraging our product technologies, manufacturing capacity, marketing and distribution networks and commercial financing capabilities."

Explaining why Ransomes had accepted the offer, its chairman, John Clement, said trading over the past 12 months "has highlighted the competitive and economic pressures faced by a business of its size and capital structure".

The offer represents a 107 per cent premium to Ransomes' share price on 20 August, the last day before the company said it had received a bid approach. Ransomes' shares closed at 57.5p, up 7.5p yesterday.

Mr Clement added that the combination Ransomes' and Tectron's resources "should result in a business that is well positioned to compete successfully world-wide."

Marylebone to develop Pall Mall hotel for Accor

Marylebone Warwick Balfour Group has signed exclusivity agreements to convert a office building into a £50m, 200 bedroom luxury hotel on London's Pall Mall for Accor of France. Marylebone will acquire a long leasehold interest in the site on behalf of Accor and undertake a complete turnkey development and construction package for the hotel group. The UK company's role will include securing a change of use for the building and planning consent for the redevelopment into a four-star hotel. A planning application is expected to be submitted shortly and it is hoped work will get under way in summer 1998. "The completed development will provide approximately 140,000 square feet of gross internal hotel accommodation on six floors through only a minimal extension to the existing framework of the building," Marylebone said.

MEPC acquires M4 site

MEPC has acquired the 26.31 hectare Iveco Ford Truck factory site on the M4 at Langley, near Slough in Berkshire, from The Ford Motor Company, for £43.5m. Iveco Ford, a joint venture between Fiat and Ford Motor, closed the site in March with the loss of 450 jobs. "Subject to obtaining planning permission, MEPC will develop a total of 18.21 hectares for commercial purposes and 8.1 hectares to the rear of the site will be disposed of for residential redevelopment," a spokesman said. Gavin Davidson, director of MEPC UK, said: "It is a prominent site, close to the intersection of the M4/M25 and near to Heathrow Airport. It has already attracted interest from freight forwarding companies seeking to take advantage of the rare availability of a large parcel of land close to the airport."

Redland fights Lafarge bid

Redland said discussions with parties interested in its main assets were progressing, and added that the board was committed to deliver greater value than Lafarge's hostile £1.7bn, 320p per share, takeover offer. Only shareholders representing 0.71 per cent of Redland's equity have accepted the offer. Redland said the low level of acceptances demonstrated the "wholly inadequate" nature of Lafarge's offer. Bertrand Collob, chairman and chief executive of Lafarge, said the level of acceptances was consistent with this stage of an offer.

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**HAMISH
McRAE**
ON THE
POSSIBILITY
OF BALANCED
BUDGETS

Forget for the moment about the ructions over EMU and the CBI: forget about the dangers of an East Asian meltdown; forget about the looming threat to US markets of the forthcoming rise in American interest rates. Instead, focus on something very interesting that seems to be happening here in Britain.

This is the possibility – however shocking, ridiculous, even bizarre this might seem under a Labour government – that our public finances will move into surplus.

The point is simple enough. UK public finances were already improving rapidly under the previous government. In July Gordon Brown tightened fiscal policy further. Now, come November, the deficit looks like being narrower still. Of course governments can always think of ways of spending money and this one might break its spending targets, but on present trends it is plausible that there could be a surplus next fiscal year.

This possibility has up to now hardly surfaced in the markets, so I am grateful to the economic team at NatWest Markets for pointing out the way in which the twin deficits – the public sector deficit and the current

account one – have been turning out much better than forecast.

The PSBR outturn last year, the one which ended in April, was £22bn or 3 per cent of GDP. This year the Tories planned a further cut to £19bn, which was then cut again by Gordon Brown to a planned £11bn. Now the City forecasters are suggesting that the deficit will be narrower still, maybe £8bn, which would be only 1 per cent of GDP. What seems to be happening is that the faster-than-expected growth has been cutting spending, so though revenues are not doing particularly well the general borrowing picture is better than it seemed even a couple of months ago.

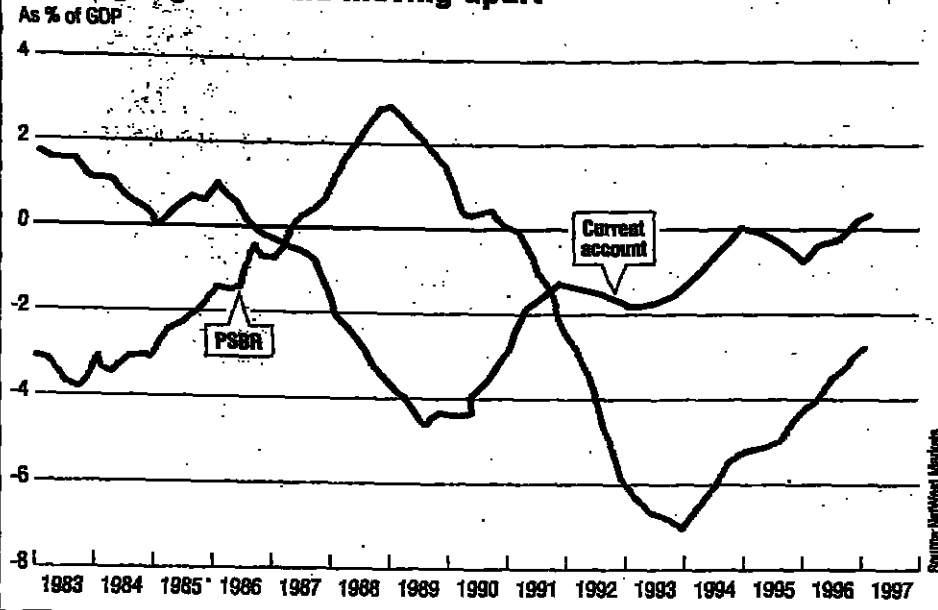
A deficit of 1 per cent of GDP would have seemed astounding three or four years ago, when things were repeatedly turning out worse than forecast, rather than better. But this might just be a foretaste. If you can get from 3 per cent of GDP to 1 per cent in this financial year, imagine where you might get to next.

For the moment, forecasters are still thinking in terms of a small deficit – NatWest Markets forecast £3.9bn, James Capel £2bn – but when you are dealing with the difference between the two very large figures of government spending and government revenue, a couple of billion either way is well within the forecast error. So there is some big change in government policy, a surplus for 1998 looks perfectly possible.

More about what this means in a moment. What about the other deficit, the current account one? City forecasters are still predicting a tiny deficit this year, after an all-square result last, but since the last three quarters for which we have figures are all in surplus, even that looks pessimistic. Whether this surplus might continue into 1998, though, is another matter.

Have a look at the graph, pulled together by NatWest, and focus on the way in which the

Moving together and moving apart



two deficits seemed mirror-images of each other in the 1980s. In the middle 1980s the current account was in surplus and the PSBR in deficit. Then the late 1980s boom saw the two switch: strong growth sucked in imports and pushed the current account into deficit, but the additional tax revenues and the cuts in benefit payments from this growth pushed the government into surplus. In the early 1990s recession reversed all this.

Now, however, the two lines seem to be moving together. The current account is already in surplus and as noted above the PSBR is fast heading that way. Question one: Will the two lines carry on together, or will they repeat the experience of the 1980s and diverge? Question two: Is there a broader message in the move of the twin deficits in the "right" direction?

The City consensus is that the narrowing of the PSBR will continue, though few are yet suggesting it will disappear, but everyone seems to doubt that the current account can continue to improve, for all see some sort

of re-run, albeit in muted form, of the 1988 boom, complete with its surge in imports, etc. NatWest Markets' forecast of a 1998 current account deficit just under £4bn is the lowest in the City. I suspect they are right, for the underlying structural forces which have improved the UK's current account should carry on working. So while some deterioration is on the cards, it need not be on anything like the scale of the 1980s.

If that is right, the second question – the hunt for a broader message – is very interesting indeed.

To answer it, imagine how people would react were the government to find itself back in surplus. Imagine how Mr Brown would react. Spend the surplus? Doesn't sound right. Remember the golden rules of spending – that governments should only borrow for investment, not for current outlays? No, there might be some modest additional spending but I cannot see it suddenly becoming fashionable to blow the surplus, particularly since in a year or two

we will be beginning to contemplate the downswing of the economic cycle. That was, after all, the mistake Lord Lawson made.

No, I think that being the only G7 government with a fiscal surplus will be taken as something commanding respect among the Chancellor's peers, and that it will be surprisingly popular among voters. The actual surplus will be transient, the cycle will see to that, but the idea that normality is not running a deficit will gradually take hold not just in the UK but across the developed world.

The idea that budgets should be balanced was the norm before the first oil shock in 1973/4. We are, in so many ways, going back to the more like the 1950s and 1960s, with low inflation and compared with the 1980s, quite low unemployment. Going back to the norm of a balanced budget fits naturally into that environment. Of course, given adverse demography, governments should really be running surpluses ... but that is a story for another day. Let's get rid of the deficit first.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

**JOHN
WILLCOCK**



Despite sporting a walking-stick and a hobble, the result of a weekend footballing injury, Edward Davies, the chairman of the Financial Services Authority (FSA), was in his best impish form at the CBI conference in Birmingham yesterday where he was addressing his former colleagues over breakfast.

In particular he could not resist a dirty trick at the expense of the CBI's president, Sir Colin Marshall. Mr Davies explained he had arrived the previous evening half-way through the traditional pre-conference dinner because his train was late, only to discover that Sir Colin was already aware of his movements. "I can't think how the chairman of British Airways got his hands on the Virgin Trains passenger list," quipped the watchdog chairman.

Speaking of the FSA, Mr Davies was also unrepentant about its decision to set up shop in the Square Mile, but in Canary Wharf, several miles east of the City in London's Docklands. Some City folk grumbled that it was wrong for the FSA, the overall investment regulator, to be so far away from the centre of power and decision making. Not so, said Mr Davies. "London City Airport and a flight to Frankfurt are only 10 minutes away."

Remember, remember, the Fifth of November, Simon Briscoe, head of research at Nikko Europe, certainly did when he thoughtfully popped out to the shops to buy his family's supply of Guy Fawkes' Night fireworks.

Unfortunately for Mr Briscoe, he had an earlier appointment on the way from work to go and hear Alastair Darling, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, defend the Government's changes to the Bank of England in front of the Treasury Select Committee.

Mr Briscoe was duly searched at the entrance to the House of Commons and had to hand over his fireworks to the police. Gunpowder doesn't seem a very advisable thing to be bringing into the House, particularly on the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot.

Happily, Mr Briscoe wasn't hanged, drawn and quartered, despite his seditious criticism of the Government for giving the Bank of England its independence.

Hans Tietmeyer, president of the Bundesbank and stern defender of the German mark, will be in London next month to receive a special prize, an award from the German British Forum for his contribution to the relationship between the two countries.

Bizarrely, the award specially cites Herr Tietmeyer's firmness for resisting the Bonn government's plans last May to revalue the Bundesbank's gold reserves. For those with short memories, Mr Tietmeyer's resistance looked at the time like a huge stumbling-block in the steady march towards the single currency. I presume that putting a halt to EMU is what the Forum decided was his contribution to Anglo-German amity. Perhaps they're right.

Let's all pause a moment to sympathise with the likes of Eddie George, Ken Clarke and Radolph Agnew. British Airways announced yesterday that from 29 March next year it will be completely smoke free.

The decision will place die-hard users of the demon weed such as the above in a tricky position. When they need to fly to global conferences and the like, do they go by BA and suffer the smokers' version of "cold turkey", or do they go by an alternative airline and open themselves up to charges of unpatriotic behaviour?

A BA spokesman points out that 95 per cent of all BA's flights are already smoke free and that they have received many letters since such bans were introduced 10 years ago "from smokers, complementing us on our nice fresh cabins".

Smoking rooms, the curse of the modern office building, were considered as an alternative, he says, "but we didn't like the idea of a very few smokers sitting in a smoke-filled room at the back of a jumbo jet for 10 hours".

And if Rothmans chain-smokers like Eddie George are really worried, the spokesman says they can "store up on nicotine gum and smoking patches".

Simon Martin-Redman, formerly managing director of Ranelagh, the Westminster-based corporate affairs company which provided William Hague with offices during his leadership campaign, has joined DBI, another consultancy, as director responsible for central government.

Martin-Redman worked at Deloitte & Touche for three and a half years, and originally qualified as an accountant in the Royal Navy. He is sceptical that the proposed mega-mergers between accountancy firms will be allowed by the Government. Which would be sad, I think, since the latest name for the merger firm of Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand is "P&L".

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Spot	1 month	3 month	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 month
UK	10000								
Australia	24303	24305	24304						
Canada	20240	20237	20232						
Denmark	63714	63645	63670						
France	23589	23576	23568						
Germany	10202	10208	10203						
Italy	14589	14583	14579						
Japan	87274	86989	86949						
Netherlands	5695	5693	5691						
Sweden	28854	28852	28851						
Switzerland	45478	45484	45483						
US	1305	1305	1305						

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	15955	10000	Iran	65527	03850
Brazil	14728	13046	Poland	74087	44020
Canada	14041	82813	Philippines	50003	34800
Czech Rep	55595	32700	Romania	55997	33750
Egypt	57596	33964	Saudi	61725	38405
Greece	22813	22813	Singapore	28815	89800
Hungary	32577	19438	South Korea	98518	99310
India	81886	38500	Taiwan	22221	90800
Indonesia	50222	33043	Thailand	32733	32000
Kuwait	03577	03030	Turkey	31837	19500
Nigeria	13859	61800	UAE	62287	36725

Interest Rates

UK		Germany		US		Japan	
Base	722%	Discount	250%	Prime	850%	Discount	050%
France		Lombard		Discount		Belgium	
Intervention		Canada		Fed Funds	558%	Discount	275%
Italy			450%	Special		Denmark	
Discount	625%	Discount	375%	10-1 Repo	500%	Switzerland	
Netherlands		Denmark		Sweden		Denmark	100%
Spain/Den	330%	Discount	350%	Repo(3/6)	410%	Discount	375%

Bond Yields										
Country	3 mth	chg	1 yr	chg	2 yr	chg	5 yr	chg	10 yr	chg
Australia	-	00	47	03	508	04	550	03	672	00
Belgium	385	02	422	02	448	05	58	01	573	07
Canada	365	-08	400	04	540	04	550	03	620	00
ECB	-	00	481	08	476	01	524	00	577	00
France	000	00	388	-02	452	02	504	01	588	01
Germany	372	02	420	03	488	05	578	02	661	02
Italy	000	00	359	05	582	01	579	02	628	01
Japan	038	01	044	01	053	02	14	05	185	05
Netherlands	373	03	439	03	443	04	570	05	580	00
Portugal	000	00	497	04	597	07	601	01	650	00
Sweden	419	00	494	04	548	05	605	03	641	03
Switzerland	206	00	234	00	278	06	250	05	365	01
UK	705	-01	771	01	680	04	680	05	595	01
US	577	00	575	01	501	02	588	01	591	01

Why lawyers and accountants are thinking about a one-stop shop

The news that Arthur Andersen has been talking to Simmons & Simmons, one of the City's leading law firms, about a possible merger is a reminder that proposed marriages among the top-flight accounting practices are not the only threat to the fabric of Britain's professional service firms. Roger Tropp looks at the possibilities.

It has - in the words of a spokesman for Arthur Andersen - long been an open secret that the organisation, which, pending the completion of the currently planned link-ups between Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse and KPMG and Ernst & Young, is still the world's largest professional services firm, has been seeking to increase its presence in the UK legal market.

Though lawyers and rivals were doubtful when it entered the field back in 1993 by setting

up Garrett & Co, four years later that practice has several offices around the country, has acquired two other well-regarded niche firms and in the last financial year contributed £15m to Andersen's revenues.

Moreover, it has since been copied by other leading firms. Price Waterhouse has an association with Arnheim & Co, while its would-be partner Coopers & Lybrand has a similar arrangement with Tite & Lewis; it is anticipated that the two organisations will join forces if the merger goes ahead. And the other big players are keen to follow suit.

While Andersen has been reasonably successful at picking up fairly lucrative but low-key work, it does not stand a chance of gaining an entry to the really serious deals without a connection with a big name. With the largest law firms unlikely to be attracted by such a venture, Andersen, headed by new managing partner Philip Randall, had to look at the next tier down.

Simmons & Simmons was a natural option because it has a longstanding link with J&A Garrigues, the Spanish firm

that became part of the Andersen legal network last year. Though the talks have been called off, Simmons & Simmons' managing director, Alan Morris, said a link-up of this nature remained an option for the firm.

The reasons why an accountancy firm might want to gain a foothold in the law are clear enough. First, there is a perception that the profession offers more opportunities for "value-added" assignments. This is especially appealing for people who have seen their central activity - audit - largely become a commodity, with clients reluctant to value it as anything other than something they have to have done for legal reasons. Indeed, it is being argued that the drive for merger at the top of the accounting profession is coming from the firms' management consulting arms, and many are talking of traditional accounting functions being marginalised in the drive for lucrative consulting assignments.

Second, such a push fits with similar moves accountants have been making on merchant banks in corporate finance. Counting on the banks'

lack of interest in the lower end of this field, they have made rapid progress in advising on management buyouts and flotations in particular.

But it is less obvious what advantages such arrangements bring for lawyers. David Furst of second-tier accountancy firm Clark Whitehill is one of those who sees definite disadvantages in such arrangements, notably in the threat to independent advice.

In deals it is not uncommon for lawyers and accountants acting on the same side to disagree on certain issues; if they come from different organisations they can debate that openly, whereas if they are both from the same stable it is more difficult, especially if the person who thinks a mistake has been made is comparatively junior, he argues.

He stresses that the one-stop shop argument is not especially convincing, since large clients do not use one law firm for all their legal work as it is, and are unlikely to change this habit if accountancy services are available as well. He is adamant that it is to the benefit of both professional advisers and their

clients that they keep their operations separate while co-operating on an ad hoc basis if appropriate.

Mr Morris of Simmons & Simmons accepts that this is what he calls a "potential downside", but he can also see two distinct advantages. First, accountancy firms, by virtue of their greater size, have the resources that firms like his need if they are to achieve their goal of becoming global firms. Second, the international combination that such a multidisciplinary partnership would produce could be something that would appeal to increasingly global clients.

Though the much-rumoured Simmons & Simmons deal appears to be off, observers do not think the matter will go away. Pointing out that the current boom might persuade lawyers that they are better off on their own, Martha Klein, editor of *Legal Business* magazine, said a return to recession and pressure on fees might create a situation where an accountancy firm "will convince a top City law firm or national law firm to go for at least a joint marketing arrangement".



Alan Morris: The Simmons & Simmons managing director sees distinct advantages in a multi-disciplinary partnership and says such a link-up remains an option

City sees Barclays/L&G merger as a logical step

A merger between Barclays Bank and Legal & General to form the biggest bancassurance group in the UK would be welcomed in the City. However, as Andrew Verity and Lea Paterson discover, any expansionary acquisition by Barclays would come at a hefty price.

Both Barclays and Legal & General yesterday declined to comment on reports suggesting that a £6bn deal was in the offing, dismissing it as market rumour.

City analysts, though, think differently and claim that such a deal would make perfect logical sense for Barclays, and possibly for other banks that want to penetrate the market for life assurance and pensions. Analysts believe that takeovers are a way of overcoming slow organic growth in life assurance and pensions markets.

Barclays is known to be looking to buy into the life insurance sector as one of several options for expansion by acquisition. The recent announcement that a large part of BZW, its investment bank, is being sold has heightened speculation of a takeover bid.

Lloyds TSB, one of Barclays'

main rivals in the high street, has also announced its interest in buying a life insurance group if it would add value to the bank's operations. Lloyds has since been linked with Norwich Union, and separate takeover talks have also taken place between NatWest and Prudential.

The takeover activity stems from the desire of high street banks to move away from the low-margin business of taking deposits to selling more profitable savings and investment products. For the UK clearing banks, income from traditional sources such as loans and overdrafts has been slowing for some time.

But analysts say sales by high street banks of own-brand life insurance and pensions products have slowed to a stop following the successful foray into the business eight years ago. Figures from the Association of British Insurers show that banks' share of the life and pensions market, which grew to 12 per cent by 1994, has now hit a wall. In 1995 and 1996, the share slipped to 11 per cent.

Roman Cizdyn, insurance analyst at Merrill Lynch, said: "Organic growth hasn't worked. The figures showing sales of life insurance and pensions are very, very disappointing for the bancassurance."

Legal & General is already valued at £6bn on its 499p

share price which, analysts claim, is well below the level that Barclays would have to pay. They reckon the bank would have to offer an expensive, and possibly unjustifiable, premium of around 20 per cent.

At UBS, Chris Hitchings, an analyst, said: "In principle it's the right thing to do. But life insurance is about brand and distribution. Barclays have the distribution already. And to a retail investor, Barclays is just as powerful a name as Legal & General, so it's hard to see what value would be added."

James Dean, Price Waterhouse insurance group partner, said: "There is a view that, in a few years' time, there will be a number of very large financial services supermarkets in this country. And no-one wants to be left behind."

Other analysts do not subscribe to the theory that there will be a rapid round of takeovers which would accelerate the consolidation process witnessed over the last two years in the life insurance sector.

That picture is now becoming blurred by the entry of newly converted building societies to the banking sector. Recent speculation has linked Halifax with the Prudential, Legal & General with Norwich Union as well as Barclays, while Northern Rock is said to be on National Westminster's shopping list.

The New Tudor Chronograph, around £1,000.



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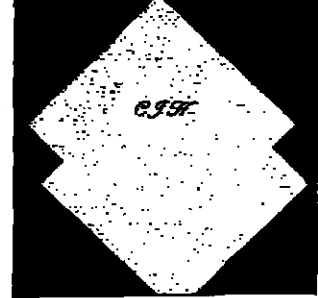
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MOTOR RACING

McLaren deny Jerez pact with Williams

Michael Schumacher is not the only one having to explain his actions to motor sport's governing body today.

McLaren and Williams will also be in the dock accused of race-fixing, a charge they strongly deny. Derick Allsup reports.

Ron Dennis, the team principal of McLaren-Mercedes, insisted yesterday that there was no pact with Williams-Renault to ensure Jacques Villeneuve beat Michael Schumacher to the Formula One world championship.

And he denied his drivers, Mika Hakkinen and David Coulthard, were allowed to pass Villeneuve and take first and second places at the controversial Grand Prix of Europe as a reward.

The head of Williams, Frank Williams, had already dismissed the leaking of taped pit to driver conversations during the race as an attempt by Ferrari to discredit the British teams and deflect attention from Schumacher's disciplinary hearing in Slough today. "We reject in the strongest possible terms any allegation of unsporting or improper conduct," he said.

However, McLaren and Williams now find themselves on the same bill as Schumacher, defending charges brought by the FIA, motor sport's governing body, that they colluded.

Dennis' explanation is that he and his team merely honoured a commitment not to interfere in the contest between Villeneuve and Schumacher for the championship.

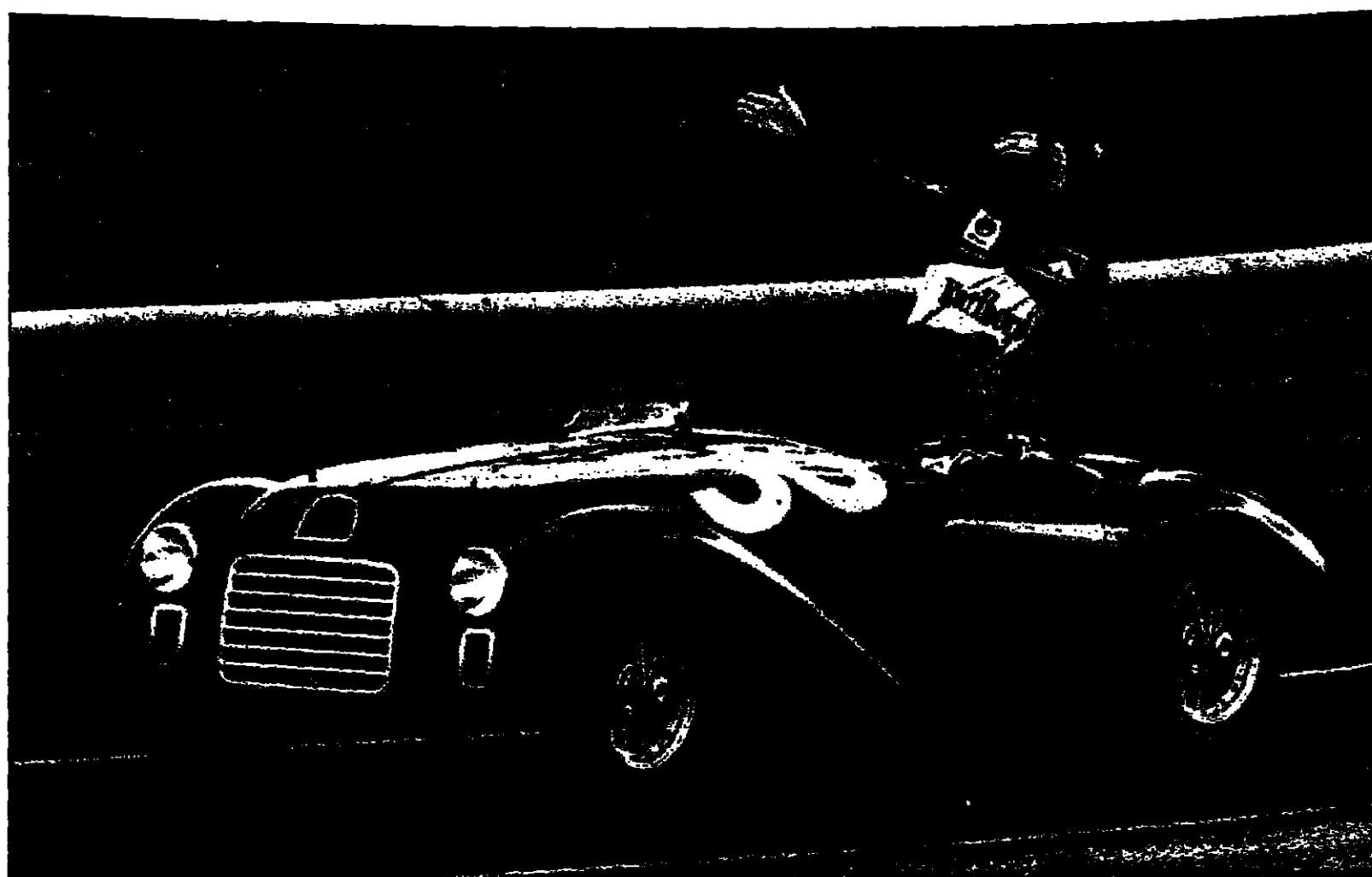
"My biggest concern is that all this may perpetuate a view that is obviously held by another team that we had something to do with the outcome of the world championship. That is obviously ludicrous," he said.

"We're being questioned about our integrity, but we have acknowledged that we specifically told our drivers before the last two races not to get in the way of the world championship. I'm not putting our team on a pedestal, but if our drivers had gone out and aggressively attacked they could have been involved in an incident that would have been detrimental to the sport.

"Our drivers were not involved in the world championship, so I believe it was the right sporting decision to let the two drivers contesting the championship fight it out."

Dennis is adamant his drivers were not instructed to force Villeneuve from the other Ferrari driver, Eddie Irvine.

"Irvine dropped away. He was miles behind," he said. "In the closing stages our guys were catching Villeneuve. He knew he didn't have to win and in a situation like that he's not



Michael Schumacher rides in the passenger seat of a vintage Ferrari as his team-mate, Eddie Irvine, waves to fans on a tour of the Pergusa track during Ferrari's 50th anniversary celebrations on Sunday. Photograph: Fabrizio Villa/AP

going to resist, he's going to move over."

Whatever verdict is reached at today's hearing, Formula One is likely to come out of it with another result.

There has been such posturing, pontificating, political conniving and mud-slinging in the 16 days since Schumacher turned his Ferrari into Villeneuve's Williams you might be led to believe grand prix racing is on the point of crisis and the authorities are covering under the bombardment.

For from it this organisation revels in publicity and will take all the flak. The world-wide outcry over Schumacher's actions at Jerez and the stewards' ruling that it was "a racing accident" prompted Formula One's hierarchy to step in and summon the German to a World Council hearing.

Max Mosley, the president of the FIA, is a political opportunist and this was another situation where the leaders had to be seen to be leading. He, of course, is a long-time ally of Bernie Ecclestone, head of Formula One's commercial operation, and supreme business opportunist. Little happens in their world without them being involved.

Ecclestone has said it is not the image of the sport, but the image of Schumacher that is at issue here. At the end of the 1994 season, decided by Schumacher's collision with Damon Hill, Mosley openly expressed the opinion that if Formula One was the topic of conversation in pubs and clubs he saw no reason to be concerned.

The fact is that Formula One is not really a sport at all. It is an industry which makes some of those involved extremely wealthy. That prosperity depends on sponsorship and viewing figures, which in turn are driven by publicity.

Schumacher and Ferrari are the most productive sources of publicity: he is the best driver in the world, they are the legendary marque. To have the red car out at the front is especially good for business.

This may explain the leaking of the "Jerez tapes" which allegedly show McLaren and Williams behaving in an unsporting fashion. To that end also, it is being suggested Villeneuve should have been banned from the decisive Grand Prix of Europe after ignoring warning flags during the previous race in Japan, for which he was merely deducted points.

Schumacher has admitted he made a mistake at Jerez, but did not deliberately crash into Villeneuve. He knows he is likely to be punished, and has talked of losing points and/or a fine. Deducting points for the 1998 season could be a convenient means of punishing him yet ensuring the main attraction is on the grid for the opening race.

Hard-liners demand the World Council invoke a one-race suspended ban, throw him out of another couple and hit him with a fine of at least \$1m (£600,000).

With or without Schumacher, the show will go on - and so will the publicity ma-

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Marino plays through pain to down Jets

Miami's Dan Marino climbed off the treatment table to lead the Dolphins to a 24-17 win over the New York Jets and leave them level with the Jets and New England at the top of the AFC East. Marino, doubtful for the game with a sprained ankle, completed 18 out of 29 passes for 186 yards, including a 23-yard touchdown pass to Brett Perriman.

Marino, who has completed 55 per cent of his passes for 2,260 yards this season, missed most of the week's training but was able to construct a winning game on Sunday in his sixth consecutive start over the Jets.

Green Bay, Denver and Minnesota continued their run of success. Denver's Darrien Gordon became only the eighth player in NFL history to return two punts for touchdowns in one game, running back both in the snow during the first quarter of a 34-0 rout of Carolina.

John Elway completed 14 of 23 passes for 227 yards, with Shannon Sharpe catching eight throws for 174 yards in the Broncos' 14th home victory in succession.

Green Bay won their 21st home game in a row, a club record, as Brett Favre threw for 306 yards and a touchdown, and ran for another score in a 17-7 triumph over St Louis. Antonio Freeman caught seven passes for 160 yards for the Packers, who kept pace with Minnesota in the NFC Central.

Minnesota's Leroy Hood scored on a one-yard touchdown run with 54 seconds remaining in the game to give Minnesota a sixth win in a row, 29-22 over Chicago. The Vikings are off to their best start since 1976.

Results, tables, Sporting Digest, page 31

PHILIPS ECOTO



Today we publish the latest results of The Independent Fantasy Football League. The player scores are for all games played up to November 9th, while the league table includes all scores up to November 2nd. The overall winner at the end of the season will receive a trip to the World Cup finals in France.

Every time one of your players score you get four points. There are four points for a keeper or a defender every time their team keeps a clean sheet. If a player scores the winning goal, i.e. if there is a one goal difference in the scoreline, the player scoring the final goal for the winning team is awarded 1 bonus point awarded in addition to standard goal related points. Each successful Assist, a pass judged by our experts to lead directly to a goal, will give a player 3 points. The opinion of our experts on the matter is final. Each player selected and starting a game will be awarded one point.

If a player is given a Yellow Card they lose 1 point, if a player is given a Red Card they lose 3 points. Own goals, either scored or conceded, do not count.

The Premiership Manager that you choose will be awarded 3 points if their real-life team wins, 1 point is awarded if they draw and no points are given if they lose.

Updated player scores and league tables will be published every Tuesday in The Independent and repeated the following Sunday in the Independent on Sunday.

HOW TO SCORE	
player score	4
clean sheet	4
winning goal	1
successful assist	3
Yellow Card	-1
Red Card	-3
manager's team wins	3
draw	1

INDEPENDENT FANTASY FOOTBALL

OVERALL SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 8 AUGUST - 11 NOVEMBER

LEAGUE TABLE

CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 8 AUGUST - 2 NOVEMBER

POS	NAME	TEAM	POINTS
1	Mr Chris King	Fearful Victory	530
2	Mr Neil King	Pin Up 4	520
3	Mr David Evans	Southville FC	520
4	Mr John Cox	Simply The Best	510
5	Mr S Srai	Amersham	510
6	Mr David Scott	The Wanderers	510
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50	Mr David Scott	Amersham	510

GOALKEEPERS

POS	NAME	TEAM	POINTS
1	Mr Chris King	Fearful Victory	530
2	Mr Neil King	Pin Up 4	520
3	Mr David Evans	Southville FC	520
4	Mr John Cox	Simply The Best	510
5	Mr S Srai	Amersham	510
6	Mr David Scott	The Wanderers	510
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DEFENDERS

POS	NAME	TEAM	POINTS
1	Mr Chris King	Fearful Victory	530
2	Mr Neil King	Pin Up 4	520
3	Mr David Evans	Southville FC	520
4	Mr John Cox	Simply The Best	510
5	Mr S Srai	Amersham	510
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MIDFIELDERS

POS	NAME	TEAM	POINTS
1	Mr Chris King	Fearful Victory	530
2	Mr Neil King	Pin Up 4	520
3	Mr David Evans	Southville FC	520
4	Mr John Cox	Simply The Best	510
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STRIKERS

14	680	Ribeiro	LEE	4
15	681	Ribeiro	LEE	0
2	684	Parker	LEE	4
3	685	Twomey	LEE	0
4	686	Twomey	LEE	0
5	687	Twomey	LEE	0
6	688	Guppy	NEW	5
7	689	Redrupp	LIV	5
8	693	McManusman	LIV	1
9	694	McManus	LIV	1
10	695	Leachman	LIV	1
11	696	Gigg	MAN	0
12	697	Gigg	MAN	0
13	698	Kaggar	MAN	0
14	699	Burt	MAN	1
15	700	Poborski	MAN	1
16	701	McManus	NEW	1
17	704	Bury	BOL	0
18	705	McManus	NEW	1
19	706	Bendley	BOL	0
20	707	Kobarska	NEW	1
21	708	Blaker	SHEF	0
22	709	Blaker	SHEF	0
23	720	Whitburnham	SHEF	5
24	723	Whitburnham	SHEF	5
25	724	Magillam	SHEF	5
26	735	Slater	SOU	0
27	736	Slater	SOU	0
28	737	Anderton	TOT	0
29	738	Fox	TOT	0
30	739	Howells	TOT	0
31	740	Ginola	TOT	0
32	741	Simon	TOT	0
33	742	Wilson	TOT	0
34	743	William	J	1
35	746	M Hughes	WIM	0
36	747	Wright	WH	1
37	748	Bishop	WH	0
38	749	Bordwick	WH	0
39	750	Wright	WH	0
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400	Bertham	ARS	0
402	Wright	ARS	0
403	Blackmore Pereira	ARS	0
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405	Blackmore Pereira	ARS	0
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408	Colyman	BAR	0
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The colt has responded well to the operation to insert two

Sheikh Mohammed's racing manager Anthony Stroud said: "I went to see Singpiel on Saturday after the racing and he seemed in very good order."

Dettoni will appear before the Jockey Club's disciplinary committee following a referral for careless riding by the Newmarket stewards last month.

An unexpected name seems

The field for the Murphy's seems sure to be one of the smallest in its distinguished history, but the remainder of Chellenham's three-day meeting – the *Craic*, as they like it to be known – will be rather better supported. The entry from Ireland is particularly encouraging, with 46 possible runners over the weekend, so it is just as well that there will be no fewer than five céilidh bands at the course to entertain the supporters who travel with them.

Home (Trainer)	Costal	William Hill	Ladbrokes	Total
Dorcas Pride (M Hounson, M)	8-1	8-1	5-1	7-1
The Grey Monk (C Richards)	8-1	8-1	7-1	8-1
Air Mailings (N Channon)	8-1	8-1	8-1	10-1
Imperial Call (F Sutherland, M)	14-1	12-1	20-1	22-1
Addington Bay (C Richards)	16-1	14-1	16-1	21-1
Spanky Game (C Parker)	20-1	14-1	14-1	20-1
Cocoon Hill (W Dorris)	25-1	14-1	14-1	20-1
Clybargo (A Pipe)	35-1	20-1	25-1	25-1

Repechage to reserve the odds, places 1, 2, 3 (Cheltenham, 19 March, 1988)

She became only the second woman to complete the course in the Grand National when guiding Fiddlers Pike into fifth place in the 1994 renewal.

Only late on - when Ricky Ponting and Paul Reiffel launched an assault - did the batsmen gain the upper hand on a placid wicket. Ponting remained unbeaten on 73 off 84 balls after smashing two sixes and seven fours against a tiring attack. The Tasmanian was visibly frustrated at being denied the opportunity to record only his second Test century because of the timing of Taylor's

Umpires: S Randall (Aus.) and V Ramezowsky (Ind).

At the Centrum, Eagles prevailed 5-4 over Sheffield Steelers, whose defeat confirmed that last season's BT Play-Off champions are finding winning form elusive this time round.

Cardiff Devils, last season's league champions and Ayr's opponents in next month's Benson and Hedges final, suffered a rare defeat, 4-2 on home ice, at the hands of the early Superleague pacesetters, Manchester Storm.

Life with the Lions no guarantee of success in wooing Woodward



ALAN
WATKINS

ON
RUGBY

It was only a few months ago, shortly after taking his new job, that Clive Woodward praised Fran Cotton's sagacity over the selection of the Lions in South Africa. He promised to capitalise on the experience of the English Lions in rebuilding the team for this season. Things have not worked out quite like this: how are the mighty fallen. The most mighty of all the England contingent were John Bentley and Matt Dawson. Both came into the Test side as replacements for, respectively, the injured Iwan Evans and Robert Howley. Both had heroic tours. Tim Rodber, though less spectacular than Bentley and Dawson, replaced Scott Quinnell, who also had to come

home early, and he did not let anyone down either. Early in the tour Tim Stimpson was being considered for a Test place, not least because his goal-kicking was beginning to rival that of Neil Jenkins in range and accuracy. Jenkins was rightly preferred in the end. With Scott Gibbs and Jeremy Guscott – and, I would add, Dawson and Bentley as well – he turned out to be among the winners of the series. But Stimpson had improved markedly, and certainly did enough in midweek matches to guarantee his place in any England team.

This was the position before he had a disagreement with Rob Andrew at Newcastle. Bentley has also been in and out of the North-Eastern side. I am not appraised of the details, but with Bentley it seems to be a question of a loss of form, whereas with Stimpson it is more a matter of money. Andrew may be right or wrong. What I question is whether he should be allowed to interrupt, in Stimpson's case, or probably to terminate in Bentley's, the international careers of his players.

The BBC commentator and former Scottish outside-half, Ian Robinson, was saying on the wireless yesterday morning that it would have been madness to pick Stimpson because of his lack of first-team practice. I would maintain that a good player remains a good player, and for national selectors to act otherwise is to place even more arbitrary power in the hands of club coaches or rugby managers, who have quite enough of it as things are.

In addition to Rodber, three other English Lions forwards find themselves on the shelf: Graham Rowntree (who is, however, given a place among the substitutes), Mark Regan and Simon Shaw. The last two can not even get into their club first-choice sides, respectively Bath and Wasps. I do not feel quite so sympathetic to them as I do to Stimpson, Bentley, Dawson and Rodber. Not only have they lost form this season; they had lost it in South Africa, and

appeared to be distinctly lucky Lions. On his South African performance, Jason Leonard belonged to the same category. But Woodward has now had the sense to move him to his natural position at loose head and give a deserved chance on the other side to Will Green, who had a good game against Brive on Sunday. Lawrence Dallaglio, by contrast, did not have such a good game – or not, at any rate, at captain. Three times in the second half he threw away a probable three points (for Gareth Rees was in fine form) by opting for the fashionable kick to touch. Roger Uttley said afterwards on television that

hindsight was always perfect. Well, I can assure Uttley that with me it was not hindsight at all. Whenever Dallaglio chose touch, on one occasion imperiously waving the more sensible Rees away, I said: "Wrong decision." If Rees had kicked nine points, Wasps would have beaten Brive by two. This would have been an injustice. I am glad it did not happen. But though I am emotionally involved in any encounter between England and Australia, I hope Dallaglio thinks a little straighter on Saturday. The other Lions that Woodward has chosen are Mike Catt, Will Greenwood, Kyrn Bracken, Martin Johnson, Tony Diprose and Richard Hill. Of these, Bracken and Diprose went to South Africa as replacements and were not really given much of a chance. Catt went out in a similar capacity and ended up as the Test outside-half, where I thought he did well. Woodward has now put him into the centre in what is – in selection anyway – an adventurous back division.

Sherwood still haunted by Gray day at Wembley

Fairness and football have always had a compatibility problem, especially when the FA Cup is involved. So it is that after a quarter-century of safe keeping and enough clean sheets to stock the Ritz, Steve Sherwood owes his place in the popular memory to a single moment of misfortune.

The 1984 FA Cup final is six minutes into the second half. Watford trail 1-0 when Everton's Trevor Steven delivers a hanging cross. Sherwood gathers, but a second later a thrust of Andy Gray's forehead dislodges the ball from his grasp to send it spinning into the net. Shades of

away to a side fourth in the Third Division, yet Sherwood is due an even break from this competition.

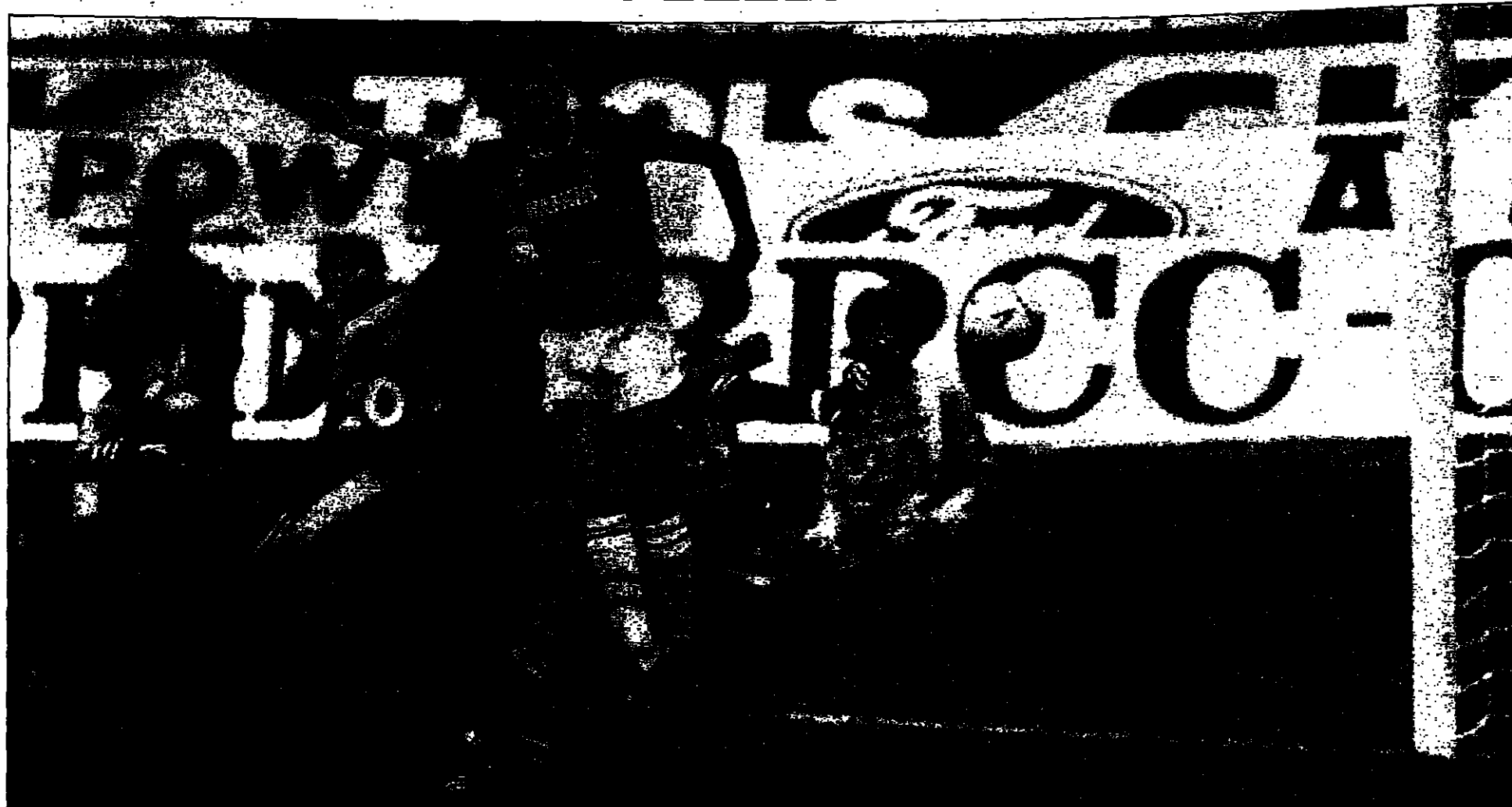
"I look back on Wembley with a mixture of pride and sadness," he said. "It was an achievement for Watford just to get there, so soon after Graham Taylor brought us up from the Fourth Division. We also had the youngest defence ever to play in the final. I was the veteran even then!"

"But I've got the game on video and the view from behind the goal shows clearly that Andy didn't head the ball cleanly. I accept that he was only doing his job and we've had a laugh about it since, though the papers weren't too kind to me the next day."

"It was disappointing, not just because we lost but because one poor decision killed the game when there was still a long way to go. We were positive we could still get into it, but it died a death after that."

Three years later, fate seemed ready to make amends. An injury to Tony Coton, by now Watford's No 1 keeper, brought Sherwood back into the side as they advanced towards the twin towers. However, in the build-up to the semi-final against Tottenham he dislocated a finger in training.

"The hospital put it back in



Shades of '88: Andy Gray heads Everton's second goal in the 1984 FA Cup final as the then Watford goalkeeper Steve Sherwood (centre) fails to hold on to the ball. That contentious incident troubles the much-travelled goalkeeper even now as the 44-year-old Sherwood (inset) prepares for another Cup adventure with Gainsborough Trinity

FA CUP
COUNTDOWN



PHIL
SHAW

These days, Gray peppers television screens with arrows and squiggles as a hi-tech Hansen. Sherwood is also concerned with assessing angles and off-the-ball movement, but with an important difference. A month before he hits 44, the Yorkshireman is still there to be shot at.

When Saturday comes, the man best known for losing out to a challenge that would not have been out of place at Wakefield Trinity will be guarding Gainsborough Trinity's goal in a first-round derby at Lincoln City. A bunch of part-timers lying ninth in the UniBond League should not have a hope

and I believed I was fit. Unfortunately the manager [Graham Taylor] felt it wasn't worth the risk – we had 10 League games left and we'd slid down the table – which I didn't agree with.

"Instead he played the secretary's son, Gary Flumley, who'd retired and was running a wine bar. We lost 4-1, so it was another case of what might have been. But I can't speak highly enough of Graham Taylor. It was fantastic to be part of Watford's rise under him."

The son of an ex-Huddersfield keeper and brother of John Sherwood, the former Olympic hurdler, he began with Chelsea where his team-mates included Charlie Cooke, Ray Wilkins and "Chopper" Harris.

During a decade at Watford he went on loan to Brighton, Millwall and Brentford, later joining Grimsby and Northampton. He was still turning out for Lincoln, of all clubs, two years ago.

There were also spells at Immingham, Stalybridge and Gateshead before he signed for Ernie Moss, Gainsborough's manager and one of the few men in football more widely travelled than him. Sherwood's job as a financial adviser for an insurance company means he is not always able to train. He has, none the less, made a vital contribution to a Cup run which started in the cricket season.

Moss takes up the story. "There was one particular save in the fourth qualifying round against Halifax, who were un-

beaten and top of the Vauxhall Conference. We'd equalised to make it 1-1 when a ricochet fell to his leading scorer, [Geoff] Horsfield, 10 yards out. He struck it superbly, but Steve made a brilliant reaction stop. Within a few minutes we'd got the winner."

Knocking out Halifax was, said Sherwood, "as satisfying as any win in my career". Really? "Absolutely. Most of the younger lads have never been to the first round and the look on their faces said it all," he explained. "We had champagne in the dressing-room and crates of lager – it was a massive thing for the club."

Why does he continue to put himself in the firing line? "Because playing gives me

an incredible buzz," he replied, almost affronted.

"I do feel the aches and strains the day after a game more than I used to, and I know I'm not going to get any better at my age. But experience is crucial in my position and I like to think mine has helped Gainsborough."

They are likely to need it at Sincil Bank. A century ago, in their inaugural Football League campaign, Trinity routed Lincoln 7-0 and later beat them 5-1 in the Cup. They also won 3-0 in a friendly last summer, though Sherwood and Moss know that history, ancient or modern, will have no bearing on the outcome.

Delving further into his catalogue of Cup disappointments

for an example of what Gainsborough might achieve, Sherwood recalled Northampton succumbing at home to Bromsgrove. "It's not a nice experience for a full-time pro to lose to non-League opposition. You feel humiliated."

When Watford were shaking up the elite with their route-one football, Sherwood's booming clearances launched many an attack. He even scored at Coventry but can no longer kick so far. "If I could," he reflected, "I'd probably be playing for Lincoln rather than Gainsborough given John Beck's reputation for the long-ball game."

The humour, like the hunger, has clearly survived that Gray day at Wembley.



Burkinshaw holds the fort as Aberdeen dismiss Aitken

Roy Aitken yesterday became the first managerial casualty of the Scottish Premier Division season, the day after a 5-0 thrashing by Dundee United left his Aberdeen side one place off the bottom of the table.

As a player, Aitken knew nothing but success, captaining both Scotland and Celtic, and winning 57 caps. But, with two wins from 12 League games this season, his position at Aberdeen became increasingly untenable. The first-team coach, Tommy Craig, was also dismissed, and the club's football director, Keith Burkinshaw, the former Tottenham manager, will take control until a new man is installed.

Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, and Geert Meijer, Feyenoord's caretaker coach, have almost certainly escaped punishment for their touchline row during the Champions League match in Rotterdam last Wednesday. Officials at UEFA, European football's ruling body, indicated yesterday that the altercation, following the foul by Paul Bosvelt on Denis Irwin, has not been included in either the referee's or the official delegation's reports. But a final decision will not be taken until

Thursday, when UEFA's disciplinary committee meets to review all incidents in European club competitions last week.

Frank Clark, Ferguson's counterpart across Manchester at Maine Road, had talks with the City chairman, Francis Lee, yesterday to fight for the jobs of his coaching staff. Some board members apparently wanted Richard Money and Peter Edwards sacked after City slumped into the bottom three of the First Division.

Clark secured a promise that Money and Edwards will not be made scapegoats. "The chairman has told me we have to button down the hatches, pull on the tin hats and battle our way through this," he said.

The West Bromwich defender Shane Nicholson faces the prospect of a lengthy ban from the game after failing a drugs test for amphetamine. The former Lincoln and Derby player, 27, gave the positive sample to the FA's doping control unit at Albion's training ground on 13 October.

● Helenio Herrera, who coached Internazionale to two European Cups in the 1960s, died in Venice on Sunday at the age of 81.

Obituary, page 19

Rogério joins the 'Bulldog' breed

That growing cadre of South American goalkeepers with the sort of deft touch from the dead ball of which Chelsea's Gianfranco Zola would be proud has a new member in its ranks.

Rogério, the São Paulo goalkeeper, scored with a spectacular free-kick as his team drew 4-4 with Parana in the Brazilian championship on Sunday. Rogério curled his effort over the Parana wall for his second goal of the competition.

Rogério, however, still has some way to go to catch the trendsetter, the Paraguayan Jose Luis Chilavert. Known to his fans as the "Bulldog", Chilavert has scored more than 30 goals during his career.

São Paulo took their goal tally to 14 in their last three games but their surge came too

late to earn them a place in the late eight as the first stage of the Brazilian championship ended.

Sepp Blatter, the general secretary of FIFA, the game's world governing body, has again called for a ban on sliding tackles, a proposal that merited some derision a month ago when it was first suggested. "I make no apologies for returning to the same theme," he says in this month's edition of *Fifa News*, published yesterday.

Blatter says that "reckless tackling, and especially sliding tackles" are dangerous not only because they can end the careers of players such as Marco Van Basten, but also of a Saturday afternoon park player.

Van Basten, the former Milan and Netherlands international striker, was repeatedly on

the wrong end of heavy tackles, which forced him to retire in 1995 because of an ankle injury.

"While the ankles of an international star striker may be worth several million dollars, those of a Saturday afternoon park player are no less valuable to their owner. They deserve no less attention," Blatter said.

"So when we wonder if reckless tackling, and especially sliding tackles should be curbed further still, it is also with Mr Average Player in mind."

"After all, he is less skilful at keeping out of trouble than the trained professional. And many a park amateur bone-grinder can be just as damaging as a hardened pro when it comes to handing out rough treatment."

In the article, headlined "One Set of Rules", Blatter sug-

gests that players, of all standards, should be protected from the tackle from behind and that while clean tackling of the ball is an integral part of the game, the sliding tackle remains a cause for concern.

He says FIFA is on its way to eliminating the tackle from behind, but asks: "When is behind not behind?"

"Must the offender be coming in from a true 180 degree angle to be punished, or is he equally culpable, as the challenge may be just as dangerous, if he comes in from a few degrees off true north?"

"Such fine points invariably invoke references to the spirit of the law rather than the letter. And the spirit must aim at protecting players who try to use their skills."

Wales face world champions weakened by striking crisis

Wales will face the might of the world champions, Brazil, tonight with almost all of their regular strikers left at home.

Wales' manager, Bobby Gould, took his 16-man squad on the 14-hour flight to Brasilia on Sunday night without John Hartson, Mark Hughes and Nathan Blake. All three were late withdrawals, while Everton's veteran goalkeeper, Neville Southall, and Bristol City's Rob Edwards also withdrew after Saturday's matches.

Ryan Giggs, who captained Wales in their last match, in Belgium, was not even named in the squad because of worries about his hamstring injury.

Gould has called up the Wrexham goalkeeper Andy Marriott, the Blackburn defender Chris Coleman, St Johnstone's former Coventry winger Lee Jenkinson and the Coventry striker, Simon Howarth.

Wales will not be facing a full-strength Brazil side. Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos and Juninho have been left out because they have already used up, or are close to using up, the quota of five friendlies for which their clubs are obliged to release them in a year.

Rangers' Stuart McCall has been called into Scotland's

squad for the friendly against France in St-Etienne tomorrow.

The 33-year-old midfielder replaces Celtic's new recruit, Paul Lambert, who has been given time off following his move to Parkhead from Borussia Dortmund last week.

McCall has made a full recovery from a serious knee injury that saw him play only seven League matches last season. He is now set to win his 40th cap in France.

The Blackburn central defender Colin Hendry also misses the trip to France, along with Lambert. Hendry was due to travel today, even though he has a knee injury. But he is now staying at home, because his pregnant wife, Denise, slipped a disc on Sunday night.

The uncapped Tottenham defender Stephen Carr has been added to the Republic of Ireland squad for the World Cup play-off against Belgium in Brussels on Saturday.

Ireland's manager, Mick McCarthy, called up Carr after injuries ruled out the defenders Denis Irwin (Manchester United) and Curtis Fleming (Middlesbrough). Capped 12 times at Under-21 level, Carr has been a Spurs regular for the past two seasons.

The number of pounds Tim Henman will take home if he wins the National Championships, beginning in Bedford today. On the ATP Tour this season, he has won \$702,746 (\$426,000).

With this prize comes a top of the range Sony SLVE230 Video Recorder - including multi-band remote control and Video+ to name just a few of its features.

19 November 1992

Calls cost 50¢ per minute at all times. Winner picked at random after lines close
19 November 1997. *Visual Memory and Subitizing* by Susan M. Carey

Woodward excites with imaginative declaration of intent

If fortune favours the bold, Clive Woodward will win tomorrow night's Lottery jackpot as well as beat the pants off the Wallabies on Saturday. England's new coach has decided to unleash five new caps against Australia, a radical selection applauded by Chris Hewett.

No one can accuse the new boy of betraying his principles. Clive Woodward's first England line-up may be wet behind the ears - indeed, his more conservatively-minded critics will say it is still submerged in amniotic fluid - but there is sufficient embryonic talent in every area of the side to ensure a compelling rugby experience at Twickenham this weekend. The die has been cast. There is no turning back.

Woodward always promised to start his career as national coach with a clean sheet of paper and he could hardly have been more true to his word. The safety-first subcommittee of Rowellism have been cast to the four winds: clearly, experience counts for little and reputation for nothing under this Twickenham regime. Current form has been the sole arbiter and that explains the absence of Tim Stimpson, John Bentley, Austin Healey, Graham Rowntree, Mark Regan, Simon Shaw and Tim Rodber - every one a Lion in the summer, every one an outsider now.

Phil de Glanville has also lost his place in the side, less than a fortnight after conceding the captaincy to Lawrence Dallaglio. The Bath centre's fall from grace was widely forecast from the moment Tim Horan, Matt Burke and company reduced his defensive game to rubble in Sydney four months ago, but ironically enough, his recent upturn in performance

marks him out as the unluckiest of all Woodward's many losers.

However, there is no denying the potential impact of a midfield reshaped and remodelled by a coach who knows more than most about that particular theatre of rugby combat. Mike Catt moves from outside-half to outside centre, Will Greenwood wins an overdue first cap alongside him and Alex King, the most subtle strategist in the English game, gets a big-time opportunity at stand-off. If it works, it will be devastating. If it goes pear-shaped, all three are sufficiently secure in the tackle to defend like dervishes.

Elsewhere, Matt Perry makes his international bow at full-back - Woodward has admired the 20-year-old Bath player's cool-headed versatility since first coaching him at the Recreation Ground last winter - while the free-scoring David Rees, smack in the middle of a hot streak at Sale, gets a gallop on the right wing. There is a new look to the back five of the scrum, too, where Garath Archer's mean aggression is restored to the engine room and Tony Diprose's footballing skills are recognised at No 8.

If Woodward has taken his life in his hands in any single area, it is up there at the sharp end. Many a Premiership club would hesitate before naming two rookies in the same front row and by plumping for Andy Long at hooker and Will Green on the tight head, the selectors have created something of a hostage to fortune. Jason Leonard, a shadow of his old self at club level in recent weeks, will have to rediscover every last ounce of his authority when he confronts a heavy Wallaby threesome in his favoured position of loose-head.

"I have picked a team that contains the best 15 players in their positions in England at the moment," insisted Woodward yesterday, politely ignoring the fact that Perry, Catt and Leonard have all been handed

roles different to those they perform at club level. "There are some unlucky players, but they could easily get a chance; there are four big Tests in the schedule for the next four weeks and I will be amazed if those 15 who start on Saturday are still there when we complete this run, against New Zealand on 6 December.

"But I know this new side will give me a feeling of confidence and excitement as I approach the Australian match. There are no experiments, no cheap caps; I would never select anyone just for the sake of finding out if he was good enough. What we have are young players like Matt Perry and Andy Long, who have convinced me that they can do a job in a winning England team."

Chastened, not to say embarrassed, by their defeat in Argentina at the weekend, the 27-strong Australian party flew in yesterday. Led by a coach, Rod Macqueen, whose lack of experience at international level mirrors almost exactly that of his opposite number, they shrugged a collective shoulder at the news of England's bravura selection and shook the long flight out of their systems with a light work-out in Windsor.

"We're not playing well," admitted Macqueen. "The important thing from our point of view is to concentrate on our own game. With five new caps, England will be looking to play a different style from the one we've been used to in recent years and I think Clive wants a free-flowing match on Saturday, just as we do. But the essential thing for us is to get closer to a pattern of play that is unique to the Wallabies."

ENGLAND (v Australia, Twickenham, Saturday): M Perry (Bath); D Rees (Sale); M Catt (Bath); W Greenwood (Leicester); A Adenayo (Bath); A King (Worcester); R Bracken (Saracens); J Leonard (Harlequins); A Long (Bath); W Green (Worcester); M Johnson (Leicester); G Archer (Newcastle); L Dallaglio (Worcester); A Diprose (Saracens); R Hill (Saracens); Replacement: P de Glanville (Bath); A Healey (Gloucester); R Cochrane (Leicester); N Back (Leicester); D Greenwood (Saracens).

Alan Watkins, page 30



Pointing the way: Alex King, England's new subtle strategist

Photograph: Allsport

WOODWARD'S FIVE NEW FACES

MATT PERRY
Born: Bath; Age: 20; Honours: England 18 Group, Colts, Under-21s.
A jack of all trades and master of most of them, Perry is the most exciting back-line prospect to emerge in England since Jeremy Guscott and while he played virtually all his schools rugby at outside-half and has spent much of his fledgling top-flight career in the centre, shrewd judges are most animated by his potential at full-back. A quiet, almost diffident character, he has a splinter of ice and a shard of steel in his bloodstream. Yet to lose a ball in contact this season.

DAVID REES
Born: London; Age: 23; Honours: England Under-21, England A.
The great unknown. At 5ft 9in in his socks and just 13 stones dripping wet, Rees is unlikely to run through Josh Lomu. He might fancy his chances of running round him, though; his performances for Sale throughout last season and in the early stages of this one have marked him out as a fearless, scuttling attacking runner. An awkwardly low centre of gravity. A natural footballer. Rees played tennis for Northumberland and football for Newcastle Boys.

WILL GREENWOOD
Born: Blackburn; Age: 25; Honours: England Students, Under-21, England A, Lions tour.
About time, too. Greenwood has been the best inside centre in England since Bob Dwyer plucked him firmly in the position at the start of last season. A strong, leggy runner with the priceless ability to play scoring passes out of the heaviest of tackles, he was considered one of the successes of last summer's Lions tour despite being invalided out after suffering a life-threatening head injury in Bloemfontein. He is most certainly now back on his game.

ANDY LONG
Born: Bath; Age: 20; Honours: England 18 Group, Colts, Under-21s.
Talk about rapid progress. Long has all the right England pedigree but Bath, notoriously unimpressed by reputations and credentials, did not consider him a first-team contender until the start of this season. Since then, he has done everything right and neither Mark Regan, the England incumbent, nor Federico Mendez, the injury-prone Puma, have been able to put the young upstart in his place. Long is big - very big - for a hooker, but his size makes him a thoroughly modern forward.

WILL GREEN
Born: Litchamptons; Age: 24; Honours: England 18 Group, Students, Under-21s.
One of the most influential forwards in Wasp's 1997 championship side, Green can both scrummage his weight and get around the paddock at a rate of knots. A front-row modernist with a range of skills that would earn him a bunch of fives from any self-respecting graduate from the Gareth Chilcott school of propping, Green's emergence as a tight-head specialist of international calibre should, in theory, solve one of Clive Woodward's most pressing selection problems.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 3453, Tuesday 11 November By Aedred Monday's Solution

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ACROSS

- Sailor perhaps returns to secure publicity (6)
- Moss play roughly; it could involve up to 150 (8)
- Little nipper has it (4,5)
- Tea could be brought round in this (5)
- A note to brown us off which makes us sick (7)
- First delivery could be eccentric (7)
- US soldier's little time for gaiety (5)
- Plant making desert animal become unwell on way back (8)
- Lacking energy, unlike Ko-Ko? (8)
- Comfortable place of non-Puritan hedonism (5)

DOWN

- Wise about boat damaged in deliberate destruction (8)
- Evergreen tree is right, however, in Australia (7)
- Perhaps having been dismissed twice is extreme (3-3-3)
- Classy lady? (14)
- About to step in to scrap consignment (7)
- How to get Pom a slice of herring? (7)
- Permission once to have a meal (5)
- Nasty one left a French rescuer unknown (9)
- It shows the way to endorse mail (8)
- Stick to a day in this place (6)
- Clear copper turned in cover (5)
- Payment sent over to French friend for Japanese art (7)
- Certainly going by railway annually (6)
- They spread old Arab jokes? (5,9)
- About 54, pined to be much older? (4-5)
- One type trained to accept a bit of hardship as a novice (8)
- One cold bird coming up to Arctic feature (7)
- Mum's worked into shape for group living (7)
- Faster abandoned pudding (6)
- Place, for example, does this? (3,2)

FOOTBALL

Watson summoned to join England party

It was just one match in the Premiership, but Arsenal versus Manchester United left Glenn Hoddle with some tidying up to do. By last night the England coach had summoned a replacement for the injured Gary Pallister and confirmed that bridges needed no rebuilding between himself and Alex Ferguson.

The man to stand in for Pallister, who had a recurrence of his back problems during United's 3-2 defeat at Highbury, in the squad for Saturday's friendly against Cameroon is Newcastle United's Steve Watson, a jack-of-all-trades player who could prove to be just what Hoddle requires as a substitute. The England coach wants his

players to be adaptable but, whereas Pallister would be a large fish on dry land if he played anywhere else but centre-half, Watson, 23, can play in any number of positions from centre-forward to wing-back. His versatility may indeed have held back his international career.

When he was manager at St James' Park, Kevin Keegan used Watson as centre-forward, centre-half, winger, full-back and orthodox midfield player. Watson, who earned 12 England Under-21 caps, perhaps fell between two stools. It is only since Kenny Dalglish's arrival that he has forged a regular place in the Newcastle first team in either the back four or as part of a central defensive trio.

"I've played in plenty of positions but I've made my mind up to take up a defensive role," Watson said. "Because I can play in a few positions it's meant I've always had a chance of being on the bench, but looking to the future I think I'll be a defender."

The Football Association also concentrated on defence yesterday to quash any suggestions there had been a falling out with Ferguson over Teddy Sheringham. The Manchester United manager had wanted to withdraw the striker from England's squad because of a knee injury, but Hoddle had insisted he be turned up yesterday at Bisham Abbey.

"There's no row whatsoever as far as we're concerned," David Davies, the FA's director of public affairs, said. "Glenn was astonished when he read the newspapers this morning."

Hoddle wants to include Sheringham in a discussion about last month's draw in Italy that confirmed England's qualification for next year's World Cup finals - a chance that was denied him when the squad went home direct from Luton Airport. "In the aftermath of the Rome game, Glenn clearly wants to talk over some things with his players," Davies said. "Alex and Glenn will stay in touch over the next few days and the situation will be assessed."

Sheringham, meanwhile, will be the subject of an investigation by Arsenal after a complaint by a supporter that the United striker incited the crowd by his celebrating the first of his two goals at Highbury. They will study video evidence before deciding whether to approach the FA. The police said yesterday that they will not be taking any action.

The investigation concerns Sheringham's pointing to the badge on his shirt in front of Arsenal supporters, who jeered him throughout for his previous connections with Tottenham. Some people might have thought he was gesturing the obvious retort: "I play for Manchester United now" but the complainant clearly considered otherwise. - Guy Hodgson

Rovers pursue interest in Casiraghi to boost challenge for championship

Pierluigi Casiraghi is the player Roy Hodgson wants to add an additional cutting edge to Blackburn Rovers' attempt to win their second Premiership title in three years.

Hodgson, who has already exceeded expectations by steering Rovers to joint second in the table, wants the 28-year-old Lazio striker to compete with Chris Sutton and Kevin Gallacher. Blackburn can expect to pay a club record £6m to £7m for Casiraghi - but the problem may be wages.

Casiraghi's demands could be

too high for the club's owner, Jack Walker. However, Hodgson insists that Rovers must boost their squad with high-quality players if they are to last the pace in the title race. He has been watching other top strikers, such as Monaco's Thierry Henry and Viktor Ikpeba.

Managerless Sheffield Wednesday's hopes of enticing Howard Wilkinson back to

Hillsborough seem certain to end in failure, after the former Leeds manager's blueprint for English football was given a big boost yesterday.

Hints had emerged that Wilkinson might reconsider his future as the Football Association's Technical Director if his "Charter for Quality" proposals were not supported. David Pleat's dismissal by the South

Yorkshire club last week led to reports that Wednesday were poised to offer Wilkinson the chance to return to the club he left in 1988 after five years as manager at Hillsborough.

Yesterday, though, the 90-strong Football Association Council gave "overwhelming support" for Wilkinson's plans for youth development, which includes the establishment of

academies of excellence at the country's biggest clubs.

Only two council members opposed the blueprint, and Wilkinson said after the meeting: "I am totally committed to the Charter for Quality. This will bring about the rise in football standards that everybody wants and put the players first."

The strength of support Wilkinson received seems likely to ensure he will see out the four-year contract he signed with the FA in February.

- Alan Nixon

FA Cup countdown, page 30

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